

Supply—Fisheries and Forestry

could be of more assistance to our small boat, inshore fishermen than adequate deep freezing and fish storage facilities. At certain times of the year the securing of an adequate supply of bait becomes a real problem. Without bait our fishermen are just not able to operate. This bait cannot be brought in in large quantities and held for future use unless there are proper storage facilities located at the small fishing centres. Proper cold storage facilities for fresh fish are also necessary. This is particularly true in my own province of Prince Edward Island, where we have a serious transportation problem.

I suggest therefore to the minister that every effort should be made to encourage and give attention to this program of erecting bait storage facilities, and storage facilities for our fresh fish. This is something that must not be neglected. As I say, I regret that this particular item has been deleted from the estimates this year.

I should like to turn for just a few minutes to a problem facing our inshore fishermen. These inshore fishermen are the men who fish from small open boats; the men who go out in the morning and come back at night. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that they still make up a very important segment of our fishing industry. Many thousands of people are daily engaged in this branch of the fishing industry; many thousands of people are dependent for their livelihood on this mode of fishing. This is a branch of the industry which gives employment to many, many people, and it is one in which millions of dollars has been invested. It must be protected, and in particular it must be protected from destruction by trawlers which destroy the gear of these inshore fishermen. I only wish the Minister of Fisheries could talk to these inshore fishermen and listen to their complaints, their very legitimate complaints, about the destruction of gear resulting from the operation of trawlers. These trawlers drag inshore. They not only destroy gear but they also destroy the fishing grounds of the inshore fishermen.

● (3:40 p.m.)

These inshore fishermen, because of the size of their boats, are not able to proceed very far from shore, whereas the trawlers can go many, many miles. The grounds close to shore should therefore, in fact must, be conserved for the use of the inshore fishermen. They have had almost exclusive rights to these fishing grounds for many years, and the whole economy of the inshore fisheries has

[Mr. McQuaid.]

been based upon the supposition that the small boat fishermen will have the use of these grounds, that they should be reserved for them. Further, I suggest that those fishermen with larger boats who can go farther from shore to earn their living should be prohibited from dragging over the gear of inshore fishermen.

Many full-time fishermen who are dependent upon inshore fisheries for their livelihood are facing a real crisis today, and something must be done, and done immediately, to protect them. I for one strongly oppose the idea that they must be phased out of the industry. One suggestion that we hear now is that these small boat fishermen must gradually be phased out of the industry. For hundreds of these men there are no alternative occupational opportunities. They have been fishermen all their lives. They know of no other way of making a living, and I say that they must be protected.

Higher operating costs, and fixed costs in relation to volume and value of their landings have resulted in a very great loss of net earnings, and something must also be done, and done immediately, to correct this situation. Some of our inshore fishermen are netting less than \$1,500 per year, and this certainly places them well below the poverty line.

Conservation is also a very important aspect of the fishing industry, though I know this is now receiving some considerable attention from the department. However, I find fault with the government—not necessarily with the present Minister of Fisheries, because he has not been in office long enough to do very much about this problem—for not drawing the base lines so that some limit will be established within which foreign trawlers cannot operate. There is absolutely no excuse, except the excuse of negligence, for the government's failure to establish these base lines long before this, thus protecting the Canadian fisheries. The government did not take very long to establish the base lines for offshore mineral rights; this was done very quickly. Why cannot base lines now be established for the fishing industry? The law has been on the statute books since 1964, yet nothing definite has been done to implement that law. As I say, I am not placing this matter at the doorstep of the present minister, but I hope that now he is Minister of Fisheries he will see that these base lines are established immediately.

That is one aspect of conservation. Many people believe, and believe wrongly, that the supply of fish in the sea or in the ocean is