

Government Organization

set-up. For example, if the debris from strip mining is likely to pollute our streams and desecrate our countryside, it should be checked. Each one of us has a share in this work and every single Canadian has to play a part. Some people will be hurt. Some unpopular decisions will have to be taken. But we are reaching the point at which our resources are dwindling. A good deal more could and should be done.

There is one more point I should like to make in connection with forestry. Every year we see the raw material leaving Canada in increasing amounts. It is time members of this house, members of provincial legislatures and members of organizations all over this country rose up in protest. We are shipping logs to Japan from British Columbia in ever-increasing quantities while half our own labour force is out of work because there are no logs for their mills. When will we learn that it is the fabrication in our own country of raw materials of this kind that provides work for our people? We are losing tens of millions of dollars by shipping out raw material which could and should be fabricated in Canada, giving jobs to Canadians in the Canadian setting. We have been negligent in this connection. Again I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to put the subject of resource conservation before the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Chairman, it is not my intention to unduly delay the passage of this particular clause of the bill. Friday seems to be becoming a traditional fish day in the house, perhaps to the chagrin of the Minister of Fisheries, but I am grateful to have this opportunity to refer briefly to the statement made by the minister on February 20 which to my mind is certainly the most important statement ever made in this house on the subject of the fisheries and one which amounts to a real breakthrough in fisheries development in Canada.

I am glad the opportunity is afforded to me in connection with part I of this bill to say to the minister that I think his statement was an excellent one. This is a view shared by the groundfish industry and by the government of Newfoundland. It is also shared by the fishermen's union in Newfoundland and, I submit, by most of the members of this house. The minister is to be complimented on his statement. My only regret is that he did not make the statement last fall.

[Mr. Harding.]

• (12:20 p.m.)

Having said that, there are a few matters I should like to mention to the minister. I particularly wish to express a concern of mine which is shared by a number of hon. members. Will the fishermen be the ultimate beneficiaries under this plan? I hold no brief for the operators of fish plants with the exception of their role in fisheries development and operation. But in my view I do have a great deal of responsibility for the ordinary fisherman.

It was pointed out last night by one hon. member that one of the features of this new policy will be the raising of price levels for frozen groundfish products. My concern is whether this will have the effect of raising the income level of the fisherman. As pointed out last night, and it bears repetition, the commodity item we are talking of here, frozen cod blocks, range in price anywhere from a low of 19 cents a pound to a high of 29 cents. The price to the fisherman who does most of the work and takes the risk will range anywhere from one and a half cents a pound, depending on buyer and area, to three and a half cents a pound if he is lucky. As a consequence of this injustice, the fishermen of Newfoundland enjoy the lowest income of any group in Canada, an income so far below the poverty line that it makes one wonder how they can possibly survive. I realize that the minister shares this concern. I should like to hear him say at some future date, or perhaps during the course of this debate, that the government will take steps to ensure that the level of income of our fishermen is raised to the point where they can at least retain their self-respect in the community.

I invite any hon. member to go to a settlement where there is a fish plant. The disparity of income is obvious. In a big house on the hill lives the owner and operator of the fish plant. In modest little frame houses below the hill live the fishermen who are denied the amenities of life to which as Canadians they should be entitled. They are denied these amenities because up until this point they are, as primary producers, the forgotten segment of the industry.

Hon. members will be interested to know that when the minimum wage law of Newfoundland was amended last year to bring the minimum wage for men up to \$1 per hour from 70 cents and for women up to 70 cents from 50 cents, the people really deserving of the protection of that minimum wage law were excluded from the provisions of the act.