

Supply—Fisheries

is not a situation we can regard with satisfaction. Surely we should not throw up our hands and say that we have developed such a high cost economy and such a high standard of living in this country that we cannot take advantage of that great natural wealth at our doorstep. We cannot take advantage of it by using nineteenth century methods. It is impossible to do that. Technological advances have enabled other countries to maintain their fisheries.

This is the most ancient of all our industries, and one which is of great importance to a large segment of our population living in the five eastern provinces, as well as, of course, in the province of British Columbia, where the fisheries are rather different, and about which I would not attempt to speak because of my lack of direct knowledge. This is the industry from which many of the people living in the five eastern provinces derive their livelihood. Surely no industry is in more urgent need of the kind of consideration that is being given to those agricultural rural communities which need rehabilitation. I suggest this is one area where there is a demand for vision and for action.

Mr. Chairman, since I have been transgressing on the time of others, that will be my last word regarding this subject at this stage of the estimates.

Mr. Stewart: Mr. Chairman, in rising to speak on the general item, I should like to state that I have no intention of unnecessarily holding up the minister's estimates. However, I feel that in view of the importance of fishing to the constituency which I represent, and in view of some of the observations which have been made by hon. members in this committee, certain information should be placed on the record.

The fishing industry, as has been pointed out by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, is very old. Long before there was any western Canada we had a fishery on the east coast. As a matter of fact, history discloses that one of the first commercial companies was given the exclusive right to the sea and inland fisheries of Canada on certain terms.

I was quite interested in the observation of the hon. member relating to codfish in Newfoundland. This interest arises also out of the statement made by the premier of that province that the codfishery of Newfoundland was on the decline. We sometimes wonder whether the decline is due to the lack of markets, improper methods of curing or even the dearth of improvement in the method of catching fish. Be that as it may, I agree

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

with the hon. member that codfishery is a very important part of the economy of eastern Canada.

When we consider the importance of the fisheries of Canada, I think we should give careful consideration to the problems facing the fishermen, particularly on the east coast. I am not going to say anything about the fisheries of the Pacific coast, of which I know very little, but sometimes hon. members, and possibly the country at large, get the impression that the only segment of our economy of any importance is the farming industry of western Canada.

Let me assure hon. members that we have our problems on the east coast. Perhaps because we are a little more independent and a little more self-reliant we do not ask the government for the same amount of assistance as do our brothers in the western provinces. Nevertheless, we have problems and it is about some of them that I should like to speak for a few minutes this afternoon.

Every year Canadian fishermen take some 2 billion pounds of fish and shellfish from the salt and fresh waters off the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. Those fisheries are valued at approximately \$200 million. Therefore, it can be seen that they are of vital importance to the economy of Canada.

The primary fishing industry in Canada supports the families of over 80,000 fishermen and also a number of people connected with the industry in various activities, and this number is increasing every year. This fact should be taken into consideration when we are talking about the per capita income of the various kinds of fishermen. Although there has been an increase in the gross production of fish there has also been an increase in the number of fishermen employed in the industry.

The extent of our fishing activity can be appreciated when we realize that Canadians have access to three of the world's five oceans. Together with its coastal islands, Canada has a sea front of 60,000 miles, which is more than twice the length of the equator. Even more remarkable is the fact that 260,000 square miles of lakes and rivers, one half the fresh water supply of the whole world, are located within Canadian boundaries.

The history of the canning industry in Charlotte goes back a great many years. We find that many years ago sardine canning originated in Eastport in the state of Maine. In the constituency of Charlotte we have the largest sardine factory in the British commonwealth. At St. Andrews we have the largest live lobster pound in the world. On the Atlantic coast groundfish, especially cod and haddock and also lobsters, are the mainstay of the fisheries, while herring, mackerel