

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Fourth report of standing committee on public accounts—Mr. Hales.

[*Note: Text of the foregoing report appears in today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

• (2:50 p.m.)

## FISHERIES

## TABLING OF REPORT ON FRESH WATER FISH MARKETING

**Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table two copies in English and French of the report of the royal commission of inquiry into fresh water fish marketing. In July, 1965 the government announced the establishment of a one man commission to consider and report on the export marketing problems of the fresh water fish industry in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario, and the Northwest Territories. George H. McIvor, C.M.G., an outstanding authority on board marketing was named as commissioner.

The inquiry arose from recommendations made by the federal-provincial prairie fisheries committee which had been studying instability of prices and demand in fresh water fisheries products, as well as the means for improving returns to primary producers by more efficient marketing.

The report of the royal commission of inquiry into fresh water fish marketing recommends that a fresh water fish marketing board be established under federal legislation. It further recommends that the board should handle all export and interprovincial sales of fresh water fish in the designated area consisting of northwestern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

The report proposes that the board should be the sole buyer of fresh water fish from the fishermen, but that the services of the present exporters, packers and processors be utilized under contract with the board. The report is being studied by the government which will consult with provincial governments and with representatives of the trade before decisions are made regarding its recommendations.

**Hon. J. A. MacLean (Queens):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that members of the house and the fishing industry, especially that segment of the industry directly concerned, will welcome this report and will study its recommendations with interest. I think it should be

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noted that the designated area, as the minister has said, consists of northwestern Ontario, the prairie provinces and the Northwest Territories.

I should like to interject at this point that the problem of the lack of bargaining power in the hands of primary producers, especially the producers of highly perishable products, is a general problem. After the government has held consultations with the industry and with the provincial governments concerned and, of course, after they have studied the report, as the minister promised they would, we will await with interest any change in government policy which may result from this report.

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, we have not had an opportunity to see this report. From the preliminary summary the minister has given this royal commission seems to have done an excellent job of investigating the problems of the inland fishermen, particularly those in northern Ontario, the three prairie provinces and the Northwest Territories. The suggestion that there be a board to market the products of these fishermen commends itself to us. We know something of the difficulties which the fishermen have faced, and the very considerable exploitation of the fishermen. They have received low incomes over a period of years.

We want to study the report, because there are constitutional problems as to how this will fit in with the various provincial administrative bodies which have been set up to deal with this matter. Certainly in our opinion the idea of an over-all board rather than provincial boards would commend itself provided the various provincial authorities were prepared to co-operate and delegate the necessary powers. I hope that as quickly as possible the government will send this report to a committee of the house so that fishermen can be heard, the industry can make representations, and the legislation can be prepared. Alternatively, the government itself might quickly draw up legislation and put it before the house so the house could send the measure to a committee.

I hope this report will not suffer the fate of so many royal commission reports, which contain excellent recommendations only to find they have been pigeon-holed. This is a matter which has been of concern to federal and provincial governments for many years. I am delighted that some action has