

*Fisheries*

they had to sell. A large portion of the fish caught in western Canada has been exported to the United States, and a great deal of that has gone to the Chicago market. As is well known by some people, there has been a difficult marketing situation there, one which in fact has resulted in a very low level of returns to the fishermen of Saskatchewan and western Canada for many years.

I also welcome this legislation as a member from western Canada because I know of the great similarity which exists between the proposed corporation and the structure and operations of the Canadian Wheat Board which has served western Canada so well over the past number of years. This is not too surprising in view of the fact that this bill arose in large part out of the work of the McIvor commission and, as is well known, a man by the name of McIvor had a great deal to do with the Wheat Board in past years. I think that this lays a good foundation for a possible solution to the problems that have been faced by fishermen in western Canada.

As a member from Saskatchewan I also welcome this legislation because in fact it represents an extension of efforts that have been carried on in our province for some years. As was referred to by some hon. members previously, it is now some 20 odd years, or about 24 years, since an attempt was first made at orderly marketing of fish products in that province.

The first attempt took the form of a fish marketing board, later succeeded by a fish marketing service, which some ten years ago was converted into a co-operative fish marketing service. These agencies performed a very useful function in bringing a good deal of stability to the communities and people who are involved in the fishing industry. However, at the same time it has to be recognized that the work and the objectives of such an agency operating only within one province were very limited. This agency could not do the things that might have been possible if the scope of operations had been extended on a wider scale.

• (8:30 p.m.)

Thus it is a welcome development, this proposal to set up machinery which will be able to operate across a large part of Canada. I would certainly be in favour of the suggestion, put forward by other speakers today, that it might even be desirable to extend the scope of the arrangements still further at some time in the future.

This program, as has already been pointed out, could be of great assistance to people of Indian ancestry who are involved in the fishing industry. It could do a great deal to improve the economic position of communities in which large numbers are of Indian descent.

As hon. members realize, this bill arises in large measure out of the work of the McIvor commission and the recommendations which it placed before the government. There is no need to refer at this moment to all the recommendations which were made, but there are certain points to which I should like to draw the minister's attention.

One of the recommendations was that the board accept delivery of freshwater fish only from the fishermen. My reading of the bill leads me to believe that this will in fact be the case. I think it is of considerable importance that the board should deal only with those who are actually doing the fishing. I mention this aspect because it is possible in this industry, as in so many others, that there could be invasion by outside commercial interests which have no particular concern for the welfare of the industry itself other than the protection of their investment and profits. I should like to feel confident that in the future this agency will be used to serve the people who are actually fishing on the lakes and streams and that it will not be used for the benefit of some commercial interest which simply happens to employ a large number of people.

A further recommendation of the commission was that the board should determine and make a final payment to the fishermen after all the fish have been sold. This is a system which is obviously patterned upon the arrangement followed by the Canadian Wheat Board. I am not altogether clear about the situation from my reading of the legislation, particularly clause 24, but I should like to be assured that the payments will be made directly to the fishermen and that no intermediate agency will be able to get its hands on money which belongs to the fishermen by right.

The commission also recommended that the Canadian government make a formal approach to the government of the United States in an effort to agree on a method of inspection of white fish which would be mutually satisfactory. I understand this would probably involve a considerable amount of negotiation and difficulty due to some of the parasite infections which have affected some