

*Supply—Fisheries*

of the aircraft rather than by those who operated from sealers or sealing vessels.

I agree with the hon. member for Skeena that all fishery problems will not be solved due to the fact that we discussed the estimates of the department before the standing committee last year; but surely he will agree with me that this was a wonderful opportunity to bring forward the problems affecting the fishing industry and for us to explain the action taken by the department. I should like to repeat what I said last year. I appreciate the attitude taken by the members of that committee.

The hon. member referred to the B.C.-Alaska salmon fishing problem. As we announced during meetings of the committee last year, the department carried on exploratory fishing and tagging programs in northern British Columbia waters to discover whether the salmon would be available for commercial fishing in the rivers of British Columbia and Alaska. This report is available. We have already discussed it with representatives of the industry and different fisheries associations on the west coast. I can assure the hon. member it is my intention, as he has requested, to table this report.

There is evidence, in the migration of the pink salmon, that the migration in that particular region differs considerably between the odd numbered and even numbered years. The south to north movements usually are stronger in the even numbered years. For this reason we will carry on a new experiment this year in order to gather the complete information. An experiment similar to that undertaken last year will be undertaken again this year and then, following a discussion with the industry and the fisheries associations, we will meet with our friends from the south, the United States representatives, with a view to reaching a decision in respect of what action should be taken.

The hon. member also referred to a matter which has been of great concern to those interested in the fishing industry on the west coast. I should like to assure the hon. member that although I am from the east coast I am not easterly oriented. I am oriented in the fisheries from coast to coast. I can also say that the same applies to my predecessor, the hon. gentleman who held this post before me.

As the hon. member is aware, I have stated that this dispute does not come under the jurisdiction of the federal authorities. In a telegram which he quoted from the minister of labour for British Columbia it was stated

[Mr. Robichaud.]

that the minister said that fishing does not come under the jurisdiction of the provincial department of labour. It is true that fishing does not come under the jurisdiction of that department; it is a federal responsibility. But in respect of this dispute it is not the fishing that is concerned. What is involved is the unloading and handling of the fish after it is caught. After seeking advice from the Department of Justice I am told that the subject matter of the dispute relates to property and civil rights which definitely are matters which come under provincial jurisdiction. Notwithstanding this, I have offered my services, in co-operation with the officials of my department, to the officials of the British Columbia government in an effort to find ways and means to bring about an end to this dispute.

Again I should like to assure the hon. member that within federal jurisdiction I am prepared to do anything I can within my responsibility to bring an end to this dispute, which is causing such concern to the British Columbia west coast fishing industry.

The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra has referred to the subsidy paid to fishing vessel owners. He mentioned 170 vessels in 1966 and close to 300 this year subject to federal subsidy. I am at a loss to understand what is meant by these subsidies. There certainly are no subsidies being paid by the Department of Fisheries. We have made very clear that such subsidies were not applicable to vessels used for salmon fishing. Furthermore no subsidies have been paid under the regulations of the Department of Fisheries to fishing vessels on the west coast. I am sure that if the hon. member would look at the figures of subsidies which have been produced by the maritime commission he would find that their figures are much lower than those quoted in the letter, part of which he read this afternoon.

• (9:10 p.m.)

I know there is a problem as referred to by several hon. members, including the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich and the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, regarding a dispute between commercial and sport fishermen, particularly in the Juan de Fuca strait. While no final decision has been reached, I have made it quite clear that it is our intention to close a small and limited area of the strait to commercial fishing, leaving it open only for sport fishing. I want to make it clear that this is not a matter of creating a precedent, but we are well aware of the growing