

\$624 million, an increase in value of 37 per cent over the previous year.

On the Atlantic coast, despite necessary conservation measures and catch restrictions, fishermen's incomes have increased 50 per cent in recent years. There is every reason to believe that this improving trend will continue well into the 1980s.

The future of the fishing industry also augurs well on the Pacific coast, where the federal government, in co-operation with the government of British Columbia, has embarked on a massive salmon enhancement program which eventually will double the amount of salmon produced in that province. There is also the prospect of a fourfold increase in groundfish catches off the Pacific coast by the 1990s. The new organization proposed in this bill will provide a strengthened basis on which to continue and extend these efforts.

The minister of fisheries and oceans is to have responsibility for seacoast and inland fisheries, fishing and recreational harbours, hydrography and marine sciences and the co-ordination of the policies and programs of the Government of Canada respecting oceans. These responsibilities provide for a comprehensive approach to fisheries and oceans issues, recognize the need for a sound scientific base both for the development of a modern fishery and to underpin our other ocean responsibilities, and establish a focal point to co-ordinate our marine policies and programs which are taking on increasing importance.

Part II of the bill provides for the amendment or repeal of certain sections of the Fisheries Research Board Act to allow that board to be replaced by a new fisheries and oceans research advisory council. The function of the council will be to advise the minister of fisheries and oceans on all matters the minister may refer to it relating to fisheries research and the marine sciences, including technological developments in those fields; the scope and adequacy of the science policies and programs of the department of fisheries and oceans, having regard to the duties and functions of that department and the science policies and international obligations of the Government of Canada; and the co-ordination of research and development programs in the fields of fishery research and the marine sciences.

The council will provide an outside source of advice to the minister on the scientific activities of the department of fisheries and oceans, and for that purpose its membership will be broadened to include representatives from other industries and departments which have a specialized interest in the marine sciences as well as representatives of educational institutions and the general public.

Fishermen across the country have indicated their strong support for these measures to establish a separate department and revitalized council, and I am pleased to recommend these proposals to the House.

The intent of Part III is to clarify and update the mandate of the Department of the Environment, which remains following the separation of fisheries, and to underline that its first responsibility is the preservation and enhancement of

environmental quality. The bill strengthens the ability of the minister responsible for the environment, to ensure that other federal departments and agencies, which have environmental protection powers as necessary parts of their specific responsibilities use those powers in a way that is consistent and meets certain basic environmental standards.

● (1520)

This part also empowers the minister to enter into agreements with the provinces for the administration of environmental programs. This underlines the intention of the government to minimize federal-provincial duplication and to rely to the maximum extent possible on the provinces for the administration of environmental programs. This concept, together with the strengthened responsibility for co-ordination and setting standards for the environmental activities of other federal departments and agencies, is fundamental to the new mandate of the Department of the Environment.

The government remains firmly committed to act effectively, in concert with the provinces, to preserve and enhance the quality of our environment for the benefit of all Canadians. The provisions now before the House strengthen the ability of the minister of the environment to lead this process.

Part IV of this bill is a technical amendment which allows the staff of Canadian Patents and Developments Limited to continue to receive coverage under the Public Service Superannuation Act and the flying accident compensation regulations made pursuant to the Aeronautics Act.

The purpose of Part V is to transfer the responsibilities of the representation commissioner to the chief electoral officer. The only person to occupy the post of representation commissioner, Mr. Nelson J. Castonguay, retired at the end of 1978 after a long and distinguished career in the Government of Canada, including 17 years as chief electoral officer and 15 years as representation commissioner. Mr. Castonguay has played the leading role in the success of our present system of the readjustment of electoral boundaries by independent commissions, and on behalf of the government I congratulate him for his achievement.

I have had the opportunity, as have other members of the House of Commons, to work with Mr. Castonguay, and we know the integrity, competence and skill with which he discharged his responsibilities, first as chief electoral officer and later as representation commissioner.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Castonguay has in the past recommended to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections that the responsibilities of the representation commissioner be transferred to the chief electoral officer, another servant of parliament who also has the independence and experience required. Many of the significant responsibilities once accruing to the representation commissioner have now been carried out, and the major remaining duties of the office arise only in approximately two years in every ten when electoral boundaries are readjusted. It thus seems timely and