

Supply—Fisheries

making speeches and showing films, and there is no one at the meetings to contradict them. I think it is better that they be brought before a committee which could question them and ask them to substantiate the allegations they are making publicly. I think such a reference would be worth while.

I would be interested in hearing the minister answer later, perhaps at the end of the estimates, whether this might be a worthwhile procedure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Godin: Mr. Chairman, when we consider the estimates of the Department of Fisheries, we notice that the Canadian government makes a contribution to international research, allows subsidies for the construction of freezing and storage facilities and fishing vessels, and also subsidizes practically all fields of fishing. The department must be congratulated for that assistance which proves that the minister is really aware of the significance of the fishing industry in our country, a large country with thousands of miles of coastline on the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, vast inland seas and very great rivers. It is gratifying to see the enviable position our country has attained in the world markets with the assistance of the department. On both coasts of this country, that is, in the two areas where the fishing industry is the most important, the majority of workers have felt the need to organize and to protect their interests.

So now they are union members to negotiate better working conditions with their employers or again members of co-operatives to process and market their products.

Nevertheless, a certain number of Canadian fishermen are currently in a disastrous position, and I wish to call the attention of the minister to the fate of the commercial fishermen along the St. Lawrence river, below Montreal. In the constituencies along both shores of the St. Lawrence river, between Quebec and Montreal, fishermen can be found who succeeded very well in earning their livelihood and that of their families. These fishermen are not relying solely on luck but on organization. They own commercial equipment, hundred foot long drag seines or large traps, made of wire or various materials and called different names according to the areas.

To tell the truth, a fisherman does not fish. One might say that he draws from our resources, that he collects and loads his boat with hundreds, even thousands of pounds, and when the fishing is good, his catch may reach

[*Mr. Allmand.*]

one or more tons. In the past month, I have met several of those fishermen who told me in confidence that they were desperate in the present situation. As a matter of fact, the situation is more than desperate, it is tragic.

Those people who managed to earn \$5,000 and sometimes \$7,000 a year saw their earnings go down last year to as low as \$600. And as things are going this year, that is, in 1967, if nothing changes, one wonders if they will manage to earn \$100. And earnings of \$100 for people who used to make \$5,000 and \$7,000, are really not a gift in this centennial year.

From Orleans island, near Quebec city, to Montreal, dead fish has been found on the shores of the river for a year and a half. Pike, pickerel, bass, carp and even eel are dying by thousands. Such a thing has been unheard of in the area in the last fifty years at least. We know that everything concerning water pollution is considered jointly by the central government and the provinces. However, I have to denounce the Expo corporation which has been polluting the river since 1965 and 1966. This is still going on, during the centennial year, since DDT or rather Rothane, if you prefer, has been poured in the river at the beginning of this summer; that is 2,700 gallons, or 27,000 pounds of violent poison.

Experts, paid to say that this violent poison is harmless cannot but agree that it is.

To the experts who are paid to say it is not dangerous, I who was paid to sell that violent poison for ten years as a salesman of insecticides to farmers, repeat that it is a violent poison and that the present situation is due to that poison dumped into the river continuously for the last three years. I hope that the minister will tell us what influence was brought to bear so that this criminal act, repeated by the people responsible for Expo, is condoned by the central government in Ottawa.

I also hope that the minister will tell us what the Department of Fisheries intends to do to help all those fishermen without another source of income, for those workers who are not asking anyone for anything and pay taxes like all other Canadians.

Will the minister tell us also what the cost will be to the Department of Fisheries because the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources neglected to assume its responsibilities before the damage had been done?

Mr. Chairman, I will deal briefly with this subject, in view of the fact that it is a matter of life or death for some fifty citizens living along the shores of the St. Lawrence. I ask the minister to make his views known on this, and