

Freshwater Fish Marketing Report

I think the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Lang) would find it very strange indeed.

Mr. Lang (Saskatoon-Humboldt): There might not be any lawyers left.

Mr. Thomson (Battleford-Kindersley): I would ask the minister to consider the matter in that light. I am a primary producer and I know that a similar matter has been a bone of contention with farmers for some time past. When a man is involved in an area of primary production for a lifetime or half a lifetime he picks up an education that an expert on marketing may miss.

As another illustration I cite the discussion we had in the house the other day on the appointment of a transport controller to expedite the movement of grain. A practical producer on the government side of the house and practical producers on this side of the house suggested that something like this should be done. But the Minister without Portfolio, who had not been involved in this matter, and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) said it should not be done. It does not seem rational.

If the Minister without Portfolio would introduce an amendment guaranteeing fishermen the right to representation on the board I might withdraw my support for the present amendment, but if he is not going to write into the legislation that the producers of this product shall be represented on the board and if he is not willing to recognize the fact that producers of this product have a right to such representation, then I question his good judgment and the good judgment of the government. It is a reflection on the fishermen that they should not have a right to representation on the board. It is the ultimate insult for these people not to be represented. For this reason I support the amendment.

Mr. David Anderson (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak against the amendment. The purpose of this board is to market fish. The object of setting it up is to improve the position of the fishermen by making, we hope, better and more successful efforts to market fish. We know full well that our fishermen are successful in catching fish because if they were not we would not have the problem of marketing and selling we are facing now. Therefore we need the best possible people on this board to do the job for which we are setting it up, which is to market fish.

So far as the proposal that all four of the federal appointees should be actively engaged

in fishing is concerned—I think this is what the amendment seeks—this obviously would not serve the purpose which we are attempting to serve with this bill. The federal government will have only these four appointees on the board. To provide that they should all come from a particular profession which is not essentially the profession that can best help the board, in other words, the fishing rather than the marketing profession, would be a negative and retrogressive step. Quite clearly, if we want this board to function properly and want to be successful in selling fish we must make sure the best possible group of people are on the board.

• (12:30 p.m.)

The minister has assured the house that an active fisherman or fishermen will certainly be appointed to the board. But to restrict him entirely to members of this profession would be a mistake. Members of this profession certainly could add a great deal to the deliberations of the board, and it is for this reason the Minister of Fisheries intends to appoint members of this profession to the board. But I believe it would be absurd to tie his hands and make it impossible for him to appoint a man who, for example, is expert in the field of selling freshwater fish or a man who has devoted his life to marketing. This would not serve the interests of the fishermen, it would not make this board effective, and in the long run it would probably make this legislation ineffective. I am not saying that fishermen cannot understand the problems of marketing and I am not saying that they should be kept off this board, but I am saying that in the matter of marketing we need people who are expert in that field.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question? Has he read in detail the terms of reference of the corporate body to be established? The terms of reference set out the power and purpose of the marketing board. The minister and the hon. member have done the same thing; they have misrepresented the purpose of the marketing board. The purpose is not only to market fish. If the hon. member will read the purpose and powers he will see that the board will be doing everything but cook the darned stuff.

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wishes I could read the purpose as stated in the bill. Perhaps this would be acceptable to him, and I believe it is necessary. Had he read the bill himself he would not have to ask me to read it for him. The