

opposition to this proposal because, as said before, most fishermen have not been paying a docking fee.

The general intent of the bill should probably be supported, but there are many areas for questions.

This bill, on the surface, would appear to be nothing more than a housekeeping bill, a bill which transfers from the Department of Public Works and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) administrative responsibility to the Department of Fisheries and the Environment. However, upon close examination I cannot help noting that this bill adds still further financial burdens to an already over-burdened fishing industry. I understand—and I am supported by the minister's statement of this morning—that legislative authority for administration of our small craft harbours was provided by the Government Harbours and Piers Act and its accompanying wharf regulations, as well as various orders in council. Because it was drafted in 1895 and revised in 1937, the act does not focus on the present-day administrative needs of fishermen and recreational boaters and does not include provision for the development of these harbours.

It is interesting to note that when programs and administrative responsibilities for these harbours were transferred to the Department of Fisheries from the Department of Public Works and the Minister of Transport in June, 1973, the transfer was brought about by order in council. Obviously, our fisheries interests have suffered because the minister's authority over small craft harbours has been derived from an order in council rather than from a legislative enactment.

I am informed, as I pointed out earlier, that some of the Transport officials have refused to comply with the order and were late in filing with the minister.

It can readily be seen from the wording of the bill that the minister has been granted wide powers, and although we are not opposing this legislation, we would be remiss in our duty if we failed to register our concern over the wording of some parts of this bill. For example, the budget for small craft harbours this year is in the order of \$35 million. Some of this money will be used for repair and modernization of government fishing wharves on the east coast.

As the minister has stated, there are some 2,300 government facilities covered under the small craft harbours legislation. Of these, approximately 1,500 are used for fishing and some 800 for recreation. From the figures we can readily see the number of people who are affected by this legislation, yet the minister gave no indication either in his remarks this morning or in the bill as to the government's intentions with regard to increased sums of money to be made available for needed improvement of the many facilities which this bill places under his care.

If we look at the estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1977, we find that the total budgetary amount for the fisheries and marine program under the heading of "Environment" comes to \$261,016,000. There are many comparisons that can be made with that figure and the amounts allocated to other government departments: namely, the CBC, \$416 million; Atomic Energy of Canada, a department which we are

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hearing quite a bit about these days, \$97 million; the National Capital Commission, \$53 million; the National Arts Centre, \$8 million. We spent something like \$50 million on erecting the building, and now it cannot operate without a subsidy of \$8 million just so people can see the show.

● (2150)

I believe the minister is working hard. He is making an honest effort. He is trying. I believe he is hoping for a better future for our fishermen. I give him credit for that. However, many of the people in the area covered by this legislation have survived for many years on hope. But that hope, I say to the minister sincerely, is now turning to despair. At the present time, on the Atlantic coast there are approximately 39,000 fishermen of whom only about 3,000 are on the offshore fleet. The rest are all inshore fishermen, dependent on small craft harbours as a base for landing their craft. They hope to have security for their ships and fishing equipment when high winds and heavy seas force them from the fishing banks.

Under this bill, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. LeBlanc) is given a sacred trust. He is being given a responsibility to ensure that adequate facilities will be provided for the safety, lives and equipment of some 36,000 inshore fishermen in Atlantic Canada alone. Since fishing markets are mostly external to Canada, it is essential, indeed, vital that this nation keep its fishing industry as efficient as any in the world. Up to this point I have been speaking only of the inshore fleet. However, our offshore fleet also requires consideration by this government.

At the present time, some 12 companies, owning approximately 50 plants, of which some 25 are served by the offshore fleet, account for approximately 80 per cent of Canada's fresh and frozen groundfish production and about 45 per cent of the total fishing production of Atlantic Canada. This fleet is struggling today. The captains are struggling to find the large volumes of raw materials required for 12 months of operation on a mass production basis. What does this bill do for them? If they increase their costs, it will knock Canada out of the highly competitive world markets it presently enjoys as a seafood supplier. Both our inshore and offshore fleets are vitally important to the Canadian economy. However, I say to this House that our only chance to exploit the fisheries resources to the extremities of our 200-mile zone and beyond this area is with a modern, efficient fleet working on a 12-month basis.

We have the expertise; we have the know-how in Atlantic and Pacific Canada. We need only a management team interested in the recovery and harvesting control of our resource to give Atlantic Canada a restored and thriving fishing industry. As the resource recovered, we could triple our present volume without adding appreciably to the number of ships in operation today, thereby assuring steady employment for our fishermen and plant workers.

Here I mention a very important adjunct to the fishing industry, our plant workers. Shore plant workers in our east coast fishing plants are facing economic hardship today due to