

Canadian Saltfish Corporation

ask the minister to ensure that the Fogo Island co-operative is involved in this corporation and made aware of its objectives. I hope it will be taken into consideration when decisions are being made with regard to the agents and others who will act on behalf of the marketing corporation.

I was told by officials of this co-operative only this week that they are happy about the legislation and are very optimistic about it, as all of us are although we have some reservations. This co-operative would have to be the sole agent on Fogo Island, where between 60,000 and 80,000 quintals of fish are produced annually. This is the only major contribution to the whole area. I could speak longer, but I shall not take up any more time in order that the bill may pass before six o'clock.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, before you put the question, I wonder whether the minister might be given an opportunity to reply. It is only five minutes to six, and I suggest he has a responsibility to make some comments.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank hon. members present in the House today—I might even say particularly the hon. members from Newfoundland—for the support they have given this legislation.

We are setting up a new corporation. It is a corporation which in my view is long overdue; a corporation of this kind should have been set up many years ago.

It is a corporation of a nature which has been recommended on occasion by royal commissions and by special committees set up to look into the salt fishery of Canada's east coast. Unfortunately, for one reason or another, the establishment of such a body did not come to pass; we have not had a centralized, export marketing agency. We have not had an organized trade or the equivalent of a trade which would serve the individual inshore salt cod fishermen well, one which would help him know what the market requires and would help him produce quality products in the quantities the market needs so that a higher income could be obtained from his catch.

The hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) referred to the corporation, in its present draft form, as a bloodless and indeed heartless corporation. It must not be that. It cannot be that. Obviously the corporation in its first weeks and months will be a blunt

instrument. I think it is up to all of us to try to improve it. Later we may want to improve the legislation. But the corporation itself will deal with many of the problems, if not all of them, which confront the inshore cod fishermen on Canada's Atlantic coast. But this legislation will have to be fleshed-out, humanized and supplemented by other measures. With this I agree.

Reference was made to centralization. There was particular reference to redundancy. The problem of redundancy was discussed at some length in the committee. This is a matter of concern to the salt fish trade, particularly in Newfoundland, but also in Nova Scotia and Quebec. There is no reference to redundancy in the act. Redundancy is a matter to be worked out by the federal government and the provincial governments which opt into this scheme.

I understand that all the provinces of the Atlantic area, including Quebec, will opt into the scheme. The reason redundancy has been left out of the bill is that property is a matter for legislation by the provinces. The provinces must have a voice in redundancy since they will have to pass enabling or companion legislation in order to make this operation whole, to make the Canadian Saltfish Corporation whole and able to operate in an effective, constitutional way.

At the present time we are developing a formula which we will propose to the provinces to deal with redundancy. In fact, we will be negotiating this formula with the provinces which will want to know what the formula is and, equally important, what the extent of the redundancy is before they present their own legislation to the legislatures this spring. I expect that companion pieces of legislation in the five provincial legislatures will be introduced and passed later this year. Redundancy will be dealt with as effectively as possible.

There is a need to rely on a number of other departments, federal and provincial. The Department of Manpower will be concerned with training and retraining to upgrade the salt fishery and help those who want to leave it for better paying jobs. We will have the help of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Department of External Affairs in selling abroad. We will have the help of the various provincial departments in making adjustments.