

Freshwater Fish Marketing Report

market. I contend this is the most important sector.

One of the biggest problems in the fishing industry in Canada is the fact we have not taken the advice of people expert in certain aspects of the fishing operation, people whose livelihood depends on it. Hon. members from the Atlantic region have seen indications of government officials going to fishing communities and having break-waters constructed without regard to the benefits to be derived from these structures by the people who will use them. These programs have not been based on a knowledge of the industry and have been set up without ascertaining what is necessary.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, practically every person engaged in the total fishing operation will in one way or another play an active role in the corporation. I think the intent of the government is to have the fishermen now involved in the trade become employees of the corporation. There will be tradesmen, financiers and marketing experts on the board. The only people completely left out are the people for whom this legislation is designed, the fishermen of Canada.

• (12:20 p.m.)

I know that hon. members have been chit-chatting back and forth ever since I began my remarks. If I had the privilege I would like to point out exactly what took place in the standing committee, but I know that to do so would take up the time of the house. I could show exactly the kind of flimsy arguments that were advanced by the minister and some of his colleagues against having fishermen on the board. We challenge the minister to present us with any indication of a sound argument against having these people on the board. He has said that we can take his word for it that the government is interested in the fishermen and in hearing their views. We ask him to give us proof of that in this legislation by accepting the amendment. We will then be happy with the minister's word.

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): Mr. Speaker, I wish to add a few words of support to the argument in favour of the amendment. This amendment, if accepted, will ensure representation of the fishermen on the board of directors. It is a straightforward matter. The fishermen will have to co-operate with this new board and unless they do so the board will not function

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

properly. The way to get it to function properly is to have fishermen appointed to it.

When the minister introduced the bill, and again during the deliberations of the standing committee, he guaranteed that fishermen would be represented on the board. If there is such a guarantee why can we not put it down in writing? I think the government is convinced that there is no fisherman capable of handling the job. I am convinced the government is not serious when the minister says he can guarantee that fishermen will be on the board. A moment ago he said this was an undesirable amendment. Is it undesirable to have fishermen represented on the board?

Mr. Lang (Saskatoon-Humboldt): On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I would like the record to show that the hon. member is referring to a conversation in the committee. The commitment we discussed in the standing committee was in relation to the advisory committee and not in relation to the board which the hon. member is now talking about.

Mr. Comeau: I accept the minister's excuse but I point out that when we introduced a similar amendment with respect to the advisory committee the same arguments were advanced against it. I submit that the minister has no real excuse for not accepting this amendment other than that the government and its members on the standing committee do not want to accept any reasonable amendment brought forward by the opposition.

I hope hon. members will have read the evidence printed in the 11th volume of the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry before voting on the amendment. It was very obvious in the standing committee, and it is again very obvious today, that the government does not want to ensure that fishermen will be represented. I honestly feel it will be a mistake not to accept this amendment.

Mr. Rod Thomson (Battleford-Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite certain that I would like to be tied to the specifics of the amendment but it seems strange that the legislation does not guarantee that some of the persons who produce the particular product involved, in this case fish, will be represented on the board. If for some reason the country found it necessary to socialize the services of lawyers and if a board were formed to look after the payment of lawyers and the act establishing the board did not provide for lawyers to be represented on it,