

Supply—Fisheries and Forestry

caught by sports fishermen. In fact the sports fishermen will be investing in boats, gear, travel, hotel accommodation and so on many times as many dollars per fish caught than is invested by the commercial fishermen today.

I was surprised to learn, for example, that the number of fish caught now off the east coast of the United States by sports fishermen is greater than the total number caught by commercial fishermen. I will repeat that. Off the east coast of the United States there are more fish caught, and I am referring to numbers of fish, by sports fishermen than by commercial fishermen. This is an immense industry which is bound to develop in this country. Coming from the west coast of Canada as I do, I cannot regard this as something for the long term future, because the sports fishery in British Columbia is as important today as the commercial fishery. It is probably worth a good deal more if one were to take into account all the secondary effects. We must know more about this particular industry. Certainly there are far more small craft owned by sports fishermen on the west coast, representing a greater dollar value, than there are craft owned by commercial fishermen. In the sense of value I would say the sports fishery is the greater of the two already and it is growing very rapidly. It is more than doubling with each passing decade. Certainly the number of small craft engaged in the sports fishery is more than doubling every decade on the west coast. I am sure this is also true, but starting from a smaller base, on the east coast. It is certainly true of the Great Lakes and in a number of our other freshwater areas as well.

● (12:10 p.m.)

The new department of fisheries and forestry must be increasingly concerned with this sports fishing aspect and, indeed, with recreation and the redevelopment of communities, some of which are solely dependent on the commercial fishery. We must be concerned with the redevelopment of these communities to service the sports fishery and tourists, all Canadians who want to travel in boats to where the fish are, and to enjoy the scenery in other parts of Canada. What I am saying about Canadians travelling up and down our coasts also applies to our good friends from the United States. This is a supplementary and complementary industry and, in the long run, perhaps even a more important arm to fisheries in Canada.

I said I wanted to make a few remarks about the main problem area which concerns

[Mr. Davis.]

members opposite today and, indeed, members in all parts of the house. This is the groundfish industry on the Atlantic coast. The groundfish industry, if I can first assess it in very round terms, has been producing \$50 million in total income for fishermen. Converted into saleable products which go to the market, this is a \$100 million industry. Not all sectors of this industry are in difficulty. Not all companies and certainly not all areas are in difficulty. But this is an industry which has problems, and these problems are of two kinds. There is the problem in respect of declining prices on the market and there is the problem of the rising costs of catching and processing fish. The industry is, in other words, caught in a serious cost-price squeeze which is not unlike the situation that the prairie wheat farmer is encountering.

In the last couple of years there has been a declining ceiling on the price for the product, and slowly but inevitably many of the costs of this industry are rising. The industry has been trying to adapt itself to these changing circumstances. It has been necessary, however, certainly during the past 12 months, for the federal government not only to recognize this problem but to do something about it. In the past year two programs were instituted, both of which I might refer to as *ad hoc* programs. They were announced in several parts and pieces. The one which relates directly to fresh and frozen fish was announced last May. At that time the former minister of fisheries said that \$4 million would be available to the industry, basically to maintain the price of fish to the fishermen. As a result of some adjustments and, incidentally, an exceptional increase in production quantity, the total sum has reached \$4,500,000. That program in its detail is without precedent in our history. We have, in what was declared at the time as being a one-shot program, begun a process of helping the industry in financial terms to the extent of many millions of dollars.

The industry has been faced, as I say, with declining prices for its products. The price for cod blocks delivered in Boston reached a high of 29 cents a pound a few years ago. It has been slipping year by year and is now down to 21 cents. My impression of the industry is that it could break even—would see a little daylight—if the price was up around 26 cents. Until the price is up to 26 cents a pound there will be a problem.

There is a problem in respect of maintaining the price to fishermen and there is also a problem which the companies face in finding