

Fisheries

territories, similar powers regarding marketing within the provinces and the designated areas themselves.

● (3:20 p.m.)

In addition to attempting to develop and expand the markets for freshwater fish, the corporation will engage in efforts to rationalize the operations of the industry for the benefit of the fishermen whose difficult position was one of the very strong motivating factors in producing and initiating this particular bill.

Years of study have gone before this bill, including work done by the McIvor commission and studies by provincial governments and dominion-provincial conferences. The objective is to obtain a more rational industry, a more stable situation, a better marketing practice and, through all these, a better share for the fishermen of the money which is to be obtained from this valuable product.

The real and ultimate purpose of this government and the provincial governments concerned is to create a totally new environment in this sector of the freshwater fisheries, and environment which will again be attractive to capital investment so that the whole organization of the industry may be changed. There are some 6,000 or 7,000 fishermen who obtain employment in the freshwater fisheries, many of whom at the present time are living at or near subsistence levels. Many of them are Indians or Métis.

The objective is that through this corporation and the regulation of the industry a better market and better prices may be obtained and that through rationalization of the industry a better return may be available to the fishermen. Through the co-operation of the provinces and the legislation which they will enact the corporation will be the effective purchaser of the commercial product for this wide area of the freshwater fishery. The corporation will be in a position to take steps to expand markets at home and abroad and to improve the quality of the product and the dependability of that product, which in itself is an important factor in improving markets and prices.

The corporation will be under the supervision of a board of directors with members appointed by the governor in council, with some of them nominated by the lieutenant governors in council for the interested areas. There will be an advisory committee which is expected to include representatives of the industry in the widest sense, from all its parts,

[Mr. Lang (Saskatoon-Humbolt).]

so that the corporation may have in this form some direct communication with the affected people and, in particular, with the fishermen. It will know quickly at all times the reaction to its efforts in the areas concerned.

The provinces will continue to be responsible for the administration of the fisheries themselves; that is to say, for the basic responsibility for conservation and similar matters. This will remain with the provinces. The corporation will not produce quotas. This will result, if it results at all, from the conservation measures taken by the provinces acting under their jurisdiction. It is to be expected that the corporation and the provincial authorities will be in close contact on these matters, but the corporation will have the basic responsibility to purchase commercial catches in the areas and to use the best possible commercial means of taking these catches to market in the most rational manner.

This is an industry that has been in need of action for some time. It is an industry which can only be successfully helped through the co-operation of the federal and provincial governments concerned. It is hoped that with the fruits of these efforts and co-operation, this corporation will do a great deal to improve the status of the men who work in the industry.

The corporation has been given powers broad enough to enter into the necessary commercial aspects of this venture, to ensure good and sound marketing practices and the best possible return to the fishermen and the industry. This bill is expected to be a very important milestone for the freshwater fish industry in Canada and I am delighted to move its second reading at this stage.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister without Portfolio why the fishermen of southern Ontario, particularly those on lake Ontario, are excluded from the proposed benefits of this bill?

Mr. Lang (Saskatoon-Humboldt): The particular areas of the fishery covered by the bill represent the result of discussions with the provincial authorities concerned. These are the areas of the freshwater fishery in respect of which, in the opinion of the provincial authorities, there seems to be a very definite need for help at this time.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, before the minister resumes his seat I should like to ask whether the corporation will have monopoly