

Deep Sea Fisheries Act

expense of the bounty is large. As far as the fishermen are concerned, the bounty is peanuts and only amounts to about \$12 a year for fishermen who apply.

● (3:50 p.m.)

I agree that costs of administration are too great, but I again point out to the minister that there is absolutely nothing in the Deep Sea Fisheries Act which requires the government to pay that interest by way of bounty. That is my point. The money is paid for the benefit of the fishermen. Section 2 of the act provides:

The Governor in Council may authorize the payment, out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada, of an annual grant not exceeding one hundred and sixty thousand dollars, to aid in the development of the sea fisheries of Canada, and the encouragement of the building and fitting out of improved fishing vessels, and the improvement of the condition of the fishermen.

Nothing in the section says that the money must be paid by way of bounty. It says, "to aid in the development of the sea fisheries of Canada."

Mr. Davis: The hon. member should tell that to his friend, who says the money must be paid to the fishermen.

Mr. McQuaid: Only because section 3 says that such grant shall be appropriated for the "said purposes at such times and by such instalments in each year, as the Governor in Council directs." Note, Mr. Speaker, that the section says, "in each year". This act was in effect last year, but the government failed to pay out the \$160,000 which the act requires it to pay.

Section 7 of the act provides in part:

The Governor in Council may, from time to time, make such regulations as he deems necessary or expedient respecting the payment of the said grant—

Under the authority of section 7 of the act, the government must now pay out each year \$160,000 for the benefit of the fishermen. It is paid to the individual fisherman. I repeat, there is absolutely nothing in this act which requires the government to pay the money in this way.

Mr. Davis: That is right.

Mr. McQuaid: The money is there for the benefit of the fishermen, and I say to the minister that if he wishes to continue using it for the benefit of the fishermen he will not repeal the act.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McQuaid: This statute is our only guarantee that the \$4 million will be used for the purpose for which it was originally intended. I have every confidence in the minister's word. If he says the money will be used to help the fishermen, I think probably it will be so used. I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that this minister will not always be Minister of Fisheries, and the next minister may decide to use the \$4 million to help the Arts Centre in Ottawa. Despite what the minister says, that money is trust money; it is there for the benefit of fishermen. The government that passed the act recognized this fact. Section 2 speaks of an annual grant not exceeding \$160,000 to aid in the development of the sea fisheries of Canada.

These moneys in trust ought to be used for no purpose other than to benefit our fishermen. If the government is anxious to guarantee the continuation of these payments, all it need do is change the regulations so that the \$160,000 will not represent a \$12.50 or \$13 payment to every fisherman. Some other way must be found which will guarantee to the fishermen of Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, and so on, that the money will be used for the purpose originally intended. That is all we are asking. We are asking for a guarantee that this money will continue to be used for the purpose intended. The only lasting guarantee we have is the present statute, part of the law of Canada.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, subsidies, generally speaking, do not solve anything. They are a stopgap at best, and I regard a subsidy of the nature of the fisheries bounty to be a stopgap measure. It was a stopgap measure in the 1880's, and a modest one at that. These subsidies are, in the main, like crutches: you cannot lean on them too long without developing bad habits. I think we have developed some bad habits in this connection.

As Minister of Fisheries, I want more than anything else to improve the industry's image. I should like to put our commercial fishing industry on a self-supporting basis. I want to be able to say that our commercial fishermen do not owe anything to anyone. I want to be able to point with pride to a fishery which stands on its own feet, a fishery which competes effectively in world markets and a fishery which is no longer burdened with outdated and awkward measures such as the Deep Sea Fisheries Act.