

Supply

of A licences. As a matter of fact A licences have decreased from 5,800 in 1969 to 4,400 in 1979.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, would the minister permit some clarification at this point?

Mr. McGrath: Yes.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, I was not concerned about the gross numbers but the continuation of this scheme. While there may be fewer boats, more sophisticated gear is being used. The requirement to obtain sophisticated gear means that many are overcapitalized.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Chairman, as I say, I can appreciate the concern of the hon. member. My understanding is that the trend is to smaller boats because of the moratorium. I will endeavour to get a more comprehensive reply and the parliamentary secretary will bring it in. I anticipated that we would be spending the afternoon discussing the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence respecting section 40 and cod. However, I will make sure that the hon. member gets an answer to his questions on the A and B licences as well as the whole area of his concern with respect to overcapitalization.

With regard to the recommendations of the Sinclair report, as the member suggests that report has been around since 1978.

Mr. LeBlanc: Late 1978.

● (1440)

Mr. McGrath: To the best of my knowledge it was never tabled in the House. Nor was it referred to a committee of the House. It is my intention, hopefully, to have the Sinclair report referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry so that the committee can examine the recommendations of Sinclair in light of the realities of the late seventies and the expectations of the eighties. I am hoping that the committee study into the Sinclair report and using Sinclair as a reference—

Mr. Rose: Not that Sinclair next to you.

Mr. McGrath: I am sure that Sinclair would make an equally positive contribution if I called upon him to do so.

Mr. Breau: You should refer him to the fisheries committee.

Mr. McGrath: The reference of the Sinclair report to the standing committee speaks to the whole need for a reappraisal of licensing policy, and in fact the need for a new licensing policy which is the cornerstone of fisheries management, whether we are talking about the east coast or west coast.

The hon. member referred to foreign investment and the concern on the west coast caused thereby. I appreciate that concern. Indeed, I had an expression of that concern on the occasions I had to visit the west coast since becoming Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It is a growing cause for concern. However, the problem is one for the Foreign Investment Review Agency. Quite frankly, I do not believe the situation is

[Mr. McGrath.]

as serious as many think it is, although I am not in a position to make that determination. That is merely a gut feeling I have as a result of the consultations I have had on the west coast with fishermen and those involved in the industry.

With regard to vertical integration, I am concerned about that, the impact it would have on the industry to restrict competition and the possible impact on the price subsequently paid to fishermen.

As to whether it has reached the point where that concern has to be expressed in a more tangible way, I am not in a position to make that judgment at the present time. It is a problem on the east coast. It could very well be a serious problem.

Mr. Rose: The effect it has had on licensing.

Mr. McGrath: That is right, and the whole business of the management of the fishery and entry into the fishery. Having said that, I will give an undertaking to the hon. member that I will, through my parliamentary secretary, endeavour to obtain a more comprehensive reply to the questions posed by the hon. member.

Mr. Rose: There was one other point with regard to bargaining rights. I wonder if the minister would address himself to that.

Mr. McGrath: With regard to bargaining rights, Mr. Chairman, that is a problem in some provinces. It is a problem that falls within the area of provincial jurisdiction. There are bargaining rights for fishermen, certainly in my province. This has been very successful. It has made it much easier for the minister of fisheries to get on with the management of the fisheries where you have a strong voice speaking for the fishermen.

Mr. LeBlanc: Right on.

Mr. McGrath: The union in Newfoundland has been very successful in that regard and has been very responsible in exercising the authority it has in speaking for all of the fishermen and those who work in the fish plants of Newfoundland. That I think augurs well for the industry. I would like to see that carried right across the country.

By the same token, the industry never speaks with one voice and that is a problem. You can very rarely get consensus on the industry side. I believe the industry is now making an effort to get its act together. They know how important that is in terms of consultations with the Government of Canada and in terms of having meaningful input into fisheries policy and the day to day management of the fisheries.

I hope the hon. member will be satisfied for the moment. We will endeavour to examine his questions to determine whether more comprehensive replies are warranted.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister for his replies and look forward to the more detailed ones. I am a bit confused about his suggestion that it is up to the provinces to