

Stabilization of Frozen Groundfish Market

any other voyage, to be successful there must be fair winds and a good crew. We on this side of the house hope that the voyage that has been embarked upon by the Minister of Fisheries will be helpful to Canadian fishermen.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I should like to emphasize that while the statement has been lengthy the fishing industry, especially on the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts, is so terribly important to the total Canadian economy that the necessity for such a lengthy statement outweighs the disadvantage of having to go through it in detail. The announcement of the minister, as I see it, envisages the prospect of the government's entering into the buying and marketing of fisheries products, with an extension of the machinery for making loans to the industry in order to help it over a difficult period.

One aspect indicates a relatively new venture and proves, I think, what we have been alleging for a long time, namely that about the only element of our society that can protect the economic and social position of people who find themselves harshly done by in this so-called free enterprise system is the government. The minister has finally realized that this is also the case in this situation.

Regretfully I fear that the attempt to try to see that the income of fishermen does not fall below the average for the years 1965, 1966 and 1967 will not be that helpful, because this particular industry has been in great difficulty for a very long time. It is simply an attempt to maintain the income of fishermen at its present poverty level. Some more dramatic moves are required in this regard in addition to those announced by the minister.

The minister stated that this step has been necessary because the industry and the fishermen in the industry found themselves caught in the cost price squeeze. One result of this has been the problems faced by the groundfish industry.

Not too many weeks ago a number of mergers, takeovers and closures on the west coast were announced in the fishing industry. The Weston Corporation virtually owns, controls and dominates the fishing industry on the west coast. The reason given for the closing of certain canneries and plants on the Pacific coast, for certain mergers of companies, purchase of their assets and so on, was that the industry there found itself in the cost price squeeze and could not operate economically any longer in the manner it had in the past.

[Mr. Crouse.]

In Prince Rupert alone, because certain canneries have closed down and will not be operating this year, and as a result of the mergers that have taken place, there is a good prospect that 1,500—that figure is arguable, but it has been used as a round figure—shore workers, people working in and around the canneries, will be unable to find employment in the fishing and the salmon industries this summer. There is a great necessity for the minister, this new department of regional and economic expansion and the department of Indian affairs, to do something immediately with respect to the situation on the west coast.

Whether the venture that is being entered into, as announced by the minister, is going to do something that is really worth while, as far as the fisherman is concerned, is rather doubtful because the objective has simply been to see that the income of the fisherman does not fall below the 1965, 1966, and 1967 average income for fishermen. As I say, as far as we are concerned it is merely maintaining their income at the poverty level; nothing is being done to bring the real fruits of a just society to these people. If the minister had accepted but one small part of the ideas that party has advocated for years, the fishing industry would be a lot better off than it is now.

[Translation]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, although you had made recommendations regarding the length of comments following the minister's statement, we have just heard endless speeches and I noticed that you were getting fidgety. Therefore, I shall be very brief and say only that we fully welcome the minister's excellent initiative.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT AND ESTATE TAX ACT

SUGGESTED SPECIAL ORDER TO FACILITATE
PASSAGE OF MEASURE

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) indicated that he and his colleagues would be prepared to co-operate in the making of a special order for the purpose of ensuring that the estate tax bill will be disposed of at all stages by the close of business today. I wonder whether the house would be