

Supply—Fisheries and Forestry

excuse the language, Mr. Chairman but apparently we are never going to have a fish policy.

I am trying to rush through my remarks to give other members a chance to put in their two cents worth. I should like to conclude by saying there are three basic problems in this industry which might be referred to as the three "p's". There is a lack in respect of prices to fishermen, there is a lack of productivity and a lack in respect of processing. If I had time to develop these three ideas I think I could point out, as my hon. friends have done today, that aspect referred to by the hon. member for Bonavista-Trinity-Conception. There is not an easy solution to these critical problems; but unless the federal government is literally prepared to come up with a medicine cabinet full of solutions, rather than band aid solutions, we will have no fishing industry in Canada, come spring. At that time we will not have to worry about the fishing industry because it will no longer exist.

We must worry now about what is going to happen next year. Long term planning is the only answer to the Canadian fishing industry's problems today. If the industry is left to die, our problems will be related to the creation of a fishing industry in Canada, rather than helping to preserve the industry we now have. We need a change of attitude on the part of the federal government, and the minister will have to face the facts. If he does not, we will be on our feet at every possible opportunity. We will continue to talk about this matter until the government is willing to deal with the problems facing the Canadian fishing industry today.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Chairman, I listened to the minister during the debate on this issue and I was rather surprised by what can only be described as his cavalier approach to what we consider to be the very serious problem, and crisis, facing the groundfish industry in eastern Canada. We listened to the minister refer to the fact that we have never had it so good, and that these are the best possible years. He referred to the queen crab industry, and in glowing terms to the herring fishery. He also mentioned fish protein concentrates and several other things, but he had very little to say about the problems we are facing in eastern Canada today. We believe this problem to be critical and of a crisis proportion. If the minister thinks the Newfoundland fish trades are bluffing he is in for a rude awakening, because I guarantee that they are

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

not bluffing. I am sure the Minister of Defence Production knows in his heart that these trades are not bluffing.

Let me suggest to the minister that it is about time he stopped playing Russian roulette with this serious problem. In his telegram of last Friday he as much as said to the Newfoundland Fish Trades Association that there will be no more aid and no further programs to assist the industry until next year. Some five months from now the industry might get assistance from the government of Canada in respect of the situation which exists today. Surely that is an indication that the minister is gambling over this serious crisis.

The Minister of Defence Production went one step further, trying to qualify what the Minister of Fisheries had said. I suppose one will have to wait until he reads *Hansard* to discover exactly what these ministers did say. We were treated to the unusual experience of two ministers speaking in the house on the same estimates, with one apparently attempting to qualify what the other said. Surely this points out the inconsistency of the entire situation.

I asked the Minister of Defence Production during the course of his speech whether he agreed with what the Minister of Fisheries said in the telegram he sent to the Fish Trades Association. However, he evaded my question; he did not answer it. I am going to read, for the record, what the minister said in the telegram which he sent to the trade the day before yesterday:

• (5:50 p.m.)

Re your tel November 28th the brief presented to the federal government by Atlantic groundfish industry is under active consideration. Impossible however for me to outline government's response to brief's proposal this week as your telegram suggests. While I recognize marketing and other difficulties which your industry faces it is now apparent that programs of government assistance cannot absolve your management of its decision-making function.

In other words, "We are going to call your bluff"—that is what the minister was saying. The telegram continues:

Please do not count on any new program of government assistance being put into effect before the end of the federal government's current fiscal year which is March 31st, 1969.

I ask the Minister of Defence Production again—he is not in his seat but he is in the house—does he agree with that telegram?

Mr. Jamieson: Do you want me to answer it now?