

salted and dried cod production over the next five years; that is, a supply of at least 20,000 tonnes per year.

[*Translation*]

When the Canadian Saltfish Corporation was established in 1970, the borrowing ceiling was set at \$10 million. In 1976, that total proved insufficient and the actual limit was set at \$15 million. Mr. Speaker, we have now reached a point where even that amount is totally insufficient. The prospects for the middle of this decade indicate the annual product yield will reach double the present volume. In addition, inflation complicated the financial problems of the corporation, as for any other commercial business, without the increase in prices for raw materials and processing costs at the rate of 5 per cent to 6 per cent a year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out the necessity of passing those amendments as soon as possible. Indeed, this bill has for a large part been prepared and approved by the government that preceded ours and by my immediate predecessor. Mr. Speaker, as there could be a strike in the fishing industry in Newfoundland, the Canadian Saltfish Corporation could find itself forced to buy additional quantities of saltfish. And as the terms of reference of the corporation force it to buy all available saltfish, it must have the power to borrow the necessary funds to do that.

[*English*]

I am sure most hon. members will recall that the corporation is a non-profit organization which employs private firms as its agents for the purchase, processing and storage of cod, then buys the product and sells it on the Canadian and international markets.

Fishermen such as those living on Quebec's north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence who fish from isolated communities in small open boats have a difficult time making a living. Since 1971 the corporation has been the sole buyer of salted cod produced on the North Shore, and since that time has played a major role in the economic well-being of the area.

Over the past seven years the corporation's marketing efforts have resulted in an increase of 200 per cent in the price for salted fish paid to the small boat fishermen. As a part of an integrated operation the corporation supplies salt to the fishermen and advances loans to outfit boats and obtain fishing gear.

I am sure this proposal to increase the corporation's borrowing ceiling will be met with the general agreement of all hon. members, and that they will give their support to Bill C-7 in order that we can amend this act very soon.

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, as the minister has indicated, this is a housekeeping bill, one which will meet with the general approval of the House. Indeed, evidence of that is the fact that the House has agreed to dispose of the bill at all stages this afternoon.

As the minister indicated, the bill in fact was introduced into the cabinet by the previous administration, a cabinet in which I had the privilege to hold down the portfolio which my

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hon. friend now holds. Certainly there is general approval of the need for an increase in the borrowing authority of the Canadian Saltfish Corporation for all the reasons outlined by my friend, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. LeBlanc).

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, normally I would take my seat, but I cannot resist availing myself of the opportunity to express a few of my concerns, which I have already made known to the minister, in respect of the direction of the Canadian Saltfish Corporation.

This is the first opportunity I have had to speak in the House on a fisheries bill. The last bill we had before the House was Bill C-28, to amend the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act. Unfortunately I was not present for that debate, but if one reads what was said in that debate one would swear, apart from references by my hon. friend opposite, that there was not in fact a change of government or that there had been a new minister in office for the previous nine months.

● (1540)

However, I just say that in passing because I will have an opportunity to lay upon the record at some future date the very substantial accomplishments of the Clark administration during the nine months it held office, particularly in the area of fisheries.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the minister's department. As one who had the privilege of being minister of fisheries and oceans, I found within the department a degree of dedication and professionalism which certainly impressed me and which certainly speaks well for the way in which this very important primary industry is being managed under the constitutional authority of the Government of Canada.

From the deputy minister right on down to the fisheries officers in the field, one could not find in any part of the public service of Canada or, indeed, in any other sector of Canadian industry, more professionalism and more dedication than among the men and women who serve the minister in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. I take this opportunity to publicly thank them for the very objective way in which they supported me when I had the privilege of holding the portfolio of minister of fisheries and oceans.

Mr. LeBlanc: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the founding president of the Canadian Saltfish Corporation, Mr. Aidan Maloney, who is now chairman of the Fisheries Prices Support Board and who is a person upon whom I relied heavily for my advice during my tenure as minister. I am sure that my successor feels the same way and that he will utilize Mr. Maloney in the same way in which I did, because he is a very important source of good common sense and advice. He was the founding president when the corporation was set up in 1970, and he served it well.