

Supply—Fisheries

the bandwagon, and before too many years we would see satisfactory results in our great lakes fisheries program.

Mr. Cashin: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I should like to join with others in congratulating the Minister of Fisheries on his first presentation of the estimates of his department. At an earlier time during the course of debate in this house I had occasion to make some reference to the disparity between the government's approach to western agriculture and its approach to the fishing industry.

Mr. Clancy: May I ask a question. How does western agriculture come into fishing?

Mr. Cashin: If the hon. member bears with me perhaps a little enlightenment will come his way.

Mr. Clancy: Let us get on with the debate.

Mr. Cashin: At that time, Mr. Chairman, I made reference to a number of matters which I felt should be part of any national policy for the development of our fisheries. My colleague from Burin-Burgeo has already pointed up one of the great problems, that of maintaining price. When we look at agriculture we see a great disparity between the measures taken by government to maintain price certainty and the measures designed to help our fishermen. Even taking into consideration the fact that there are eight and a half times as many farmers in Canada, it is interesting to note that the fishermen receive only about one seventh of the price subsidies received by farmers. This is a great disparity and any development program which did not take this into account would be doing a disservice to the industry. As the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo (Mr. Carter) has said, the price paid to fishermen in Newfoundland is very low. There are those who say the fish plants could afford to pay more. I do not have the evidence to support that statement, but it remains a fact that present prices paid for fresh fish in Newfoundland are too low, and unless there is some increase I fear for the future of the industry.

In the field of agriculture, various measures have been devised to reduce the uncertainties attaching to production and sale. There are those who say that fishing is so dissimilar to agriculture that the application of programs such as crop insurance, or their equivalent, to the fishing industry would not be possible. But to my knowledge no real attempt has been made to see whether or not it is feasible to develop crop insurance for the fisheries, though I think this is an important ingredient in any plan for the development of the industry. I feel it would be a great inducement

to the fishermen when they are planning their work for the year if they could feel there was an insurance scheme of this type in effect. Of course, improved technical knowledge and improved equipment would also reduce the risk.

A further consideration which should be borne in mind in any program for the industry is marketing. Marketing development is most important, particularly with respect to the salt fish trade. It has been suggested that a body somewhat similar to the Canadian wheat board could be used to market our salt fish. The wheat board has an excellent record of developing world markets for western grain, but no action has been taken to set up a similar organization to help look after the interests of the fishing industry.

A fourth important measure which I believe would be an ingredient of a good fisheries program would be means of expanding credit facilities. When we compare the credit made available to our fishermen with the credit facilities at the disposal of agriculture, we again find a great disparity. Perhaps I might be allowed to put some figures on record. In 1962, approximately \$1.2 billions was paid out under the Canadian Farm Loan Act. This is approximately one thousand times greater than the \$1.3 millions paid out under the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act. Under this act, since 1955, there have been only 12 loans in Newfoundland, I understand, to a total of something in the area of \$16,000. The reason for this situation is that the act is not suited to the needs of inshore fishermen in Newfoundland. Proper financing has never been part of the life of the fisherman there. The outdated credit system under which individual fishermen operate is much the same as it was centuries ago. I believe a great challenge faces the minister here if he wishes to do something of lasting benefit for the fishing industry, particularly in Newfoundland.

The hon. member for Skeena correctly called attention to the differences between the fisheries on the east coast and on the west coast. There are also important differences between the fisheries in Newfoundland and in some of the maritime provinces. In Newfoundland we have a much larger inshore fishery—fishermen with limited equipment engage in the fishery and trawler operations and dragger operations are not as great. Far more individuals are involved. Basically, what is needed is a substantial addition to the thinking of the federal government in its approach to fisheries policy. The present approach concentrates on inspection, regulation, research and the provision of physical facilities to a limited extent. It also provides facilities for vessel construction and, to a

[Mr. Noble.]