

*Fisheries Improvement Loans Act*

of the fishing industry to the Atlantic provinces. The primary and processing branches together contribute over 8 per cent of the total net value of commodity production in the area, employ more than 6 per cent of the regional labour force, and fish products make up approximately one fifth of the total regional exports. However, in recent years the fishing industry has been going through a period of radical adjustment and there is really no quick solution—I am the first to recognize this fact—to some of its problems.

For example, on the Atlantic coast we have a highly productive, heavily capitalized off-shore fishery, and also a low productive, highly seasonal, labour intensive in-shore fishery yielding low incomes to those who rely on it for a livelihood. In addition, in the last 20 years there has been a tremendous shift from the traditional salt cod industry to the more diversified fresh and frozen fish products industry. Increasing pressure on fish stocks, not only by Canada but by other large fishing nations, has led to diminishing rewards for our fishermen and lower returns on their investment. Looking at the over-all industry there has been a downward trend in fisheries employment because the expansion in the offshore industry has been more than offset by a decline in inshore fishing activity.

In my opinion, this situation will continue and in fact will intensify in the years ahead, for it seems to me that in all industries the day of the independent, small scale primary producer is fast drawing to a close. The larger ships, the new and different fishing methods and equipment, plus an ever increasing use of electronic equipment have put all but a few of the small operators out of step with the present.

I believe future developments in the fishing industry must be viewed within the context of the development of the economy as a whole. I know the minister is working towards that end and he has given us some idea of what we can hope for in the future, but we in the Atlantic provinces hope it is not too long in coming. We look with much longing for his program, which from time to time he has hinted is coming.

Since it is evident that the off-shore fishery is more productive, and provides steadier employment and higher incomes, I believe we must give more thought to programs which will assist our fishermen to take advantage of this resource. In fact, with the expansion taking place in the fishing fleets of other nations we have no choice but to expand further our

[Mr. Crouse.]

off-shore fleet if we wish to capitalize on this industry and provide further employment for our people. When you realize that we as Canadians are sending only one ton of fishing equipment to sea for every 80 tons sent by other countries you begin to realize that we must wake up, that we must look around and seize the opportunities that are open to us before they are taken away and developed by others.

Another interesting fact is that the ratio of Canadian fishing ships to those of other countries off to our shores is approximately 1 to 22. Now, this offshore expansion cannot take place over night. Some of our inshore fishermen are not young enough or physically capable of engaging in the offshore fishing industry. Therefore, some of this change can only come about as other jobs become available in other fields.

This is one of the reasons that we also look forward with interest to the regional development program of which we heard so much during the June election—

**Mr. Stanfield:** And seen so little of since.

**Mr. Crouse:** —and have seen so little of since that time. Any development program must be beamed toward our younger people, letting the eventual retirement of older fishermen gradually reduce their numbers to more acceptable levels, even though this may take a slightly longer period than would otherwise be desirable.

By encouraging programs which will expand the off-shore fishery it is hoped that the number of in-shore fishermen will be reduced, thus providing the inshore fishermen with a better chance of catching more fish and earning a better standard of living.

• (8:40 p.m.)

In summing up, I would suggest to the minister that if we are to have an orderly development of a modern fishing industry we must give encouragement to the trend from small inshore fishing operations to larger off-shore fishing vessels and even more modern fishing techniques. In order to bring this about the minister and his officials must give further consideration to the present ship-building subsidy program and reactivate the fishing vessel assistance program. Obviously this legislation which we now have under consideration is not adequate for this purpose. It alone will not enable our inshore fishermen, who are desirous of building 65 foot or 75 foot longliners, to achieve their goal. A