

Supply—Fisheries

I have previously urged that a line be drawn up on the west coast of Vancouver island and the west coast of Queen Charlotte island and that all waters east of that line, if they cannot be considered as territorial waters for all purposes, should be considered as waters over which the Canadian government through the fisheries department should exercise some control. I would ask the minister when he is replying to tell us what progress has been made by that commission headed by Dean Curtis and how far they have got and whether they have been able to submit any reports to the government or to the international committee in connection with the United Nations which is also studying that point.

I am pleased to note that commercial fishermen have already been appointed to many of these international boards. I can only say that I wish that that had been done at the time when the international agreement between the United States, Japan and Canada was being drawn up. I think such appointments would have eliminated much of the misunderstanding which existed amongst the actual fishermen when that agreement was first published and when there was so much heated discussion in the unions and in the industry itself as to those agreements. I am sure that perhaps some of the unions were themselves to blame by not taking advantage of the opportunities offered to them, but at the same time had there been fishermen more actively connected with the drawing up of that agreement I believe there would have been less misunderstanding.

In closing, and as I said at the commencement of my remarks, I believe that the general policy adopted by the minister, particularly as regards conservation and the encouragement in the catching of fish under the most favourable circumstances as well as in marketing, is in general along the right lines. I can only urge him to concentrate on these endeavours and to intensify his efforts along these lines.

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich thanked the minister for the very comprehensive statement he made in introducing his estimates. I think I can go a little farther than the hon. member and congratulate the minister on making that comprehensive statement. I think it is probably the best statement made by any minister on the estimates for a very long time.

The hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich mentioned that the minister's statement would probably shorten preliminary debates on the

[Mr. Pearkes.]

first item of the estimates dealing with administration. I do not know whether it will have that effect on the hon. member but it certainly will have that effect on me because the minister has answered most of the questions I intended raising. I really would be repeating some of the things the minister said and some of the matters outlined by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat if I were to extend my remarks. I think one of the best things the minister was able to report was the improvement in the fish marketing over this time last year.

I think it is really a remarkable achievement in which I presume the fishing industry itself, as well as the government, had a part. But as I understand it, last year there was not only the one year's catch to be sold but there was a carryover from one or two previous years. It is really a most gratifying thing to know that, in this time of dwindling markets, in this particular instance we should have had such good results.

In connection with the conservation regulations on the Fraser river, may I say that I had a number of communications from persons and organizations who would be affected by those regulations. While I am pleased that the minister or the department has seen fit to extend the time, I certainly would not press the minister to do that because it is a situation in which the layman must walk warily. I do not know all the problems involved but I know the importance of conservation; and I know that it would be much better to conserve this year and next year, even to the point where it hurts, so that we may have better fishing in the years following. While I wish to thank the minister for taking this matter in easy steps—I am sure it was done after consideration—it is something that I myself would not press or plead for because, as I say, I do not know what the results would be.

I could, of course, refer to several other matters but by doing so I would not be adding anything to this debate. I will merely say again that I wish to congratulate the minister for the excellent statement he took the time to give to the committee. I know it was not such a great achievement for him because he has been talking about this thing for the last few months. He or his department was good enough to send me a copy of the speech he made when he spoke in British Columbia to the convention of the united fishermen and allied workers, and in which mention was made of these things. I thought the speech was a forthright one and that it said the right things at the right time in the right place.