

Supply—Fisheries

This is true, if the commercial fishing industry in lake Ontario and the other great lakes is going to survive. I point out to the minister the clear and vital need for his department devoting their utmost to the study of this situation. We are living in a fool's paradise because pollution of our lakes and streams is allowed to continue. I believe things are not well with the industry over which this department presides because I note the hon. member for York East has pointed out some places in which there are problems connected with the industry.

We have one family among many in my area who have been fishing for a living for many years. This family reports to me that they own approximately \$100,000 worth of first class fishing equipment, including a tug, and many nets. They cannot now make a living from commercial fishing, even with all the gear they have accumulated because of the reduction in the available catch. They are going out and coming in with nearly nothing. They are losing money on their investment. It would be well for the federal-provincial committees the minister has mentioned, and the international joint commission, who have a certain amount of jurisdiction over these international waters, to study this situation of pollution on the great lakes. Pollution sounds the death knell of commercial fishing on these lakes unless we do something about it. We are, in fact, befouling our own nests. Last summer, in fact, the pickerel were floating dead by the millions on the bay of Quinte and along the shores of Prince Edward county, that is the northern shore of lake Ontario. The whitefish have been killed off by the lamprey. We have not even conquered the lamprey eel as yet, although I will admit that progress has been made along this line. We have a long way to go yet. The lake trout are practically extinct in all the lakes except lake Superior.

This matter deserves the attention of the government, first, because of the employment factor; second, because of the food processing factor which adds to employment in the secondary industrial field. Third, the transportation factor, which is very important and the international balance of trade which I mentioned earlier, deserve our attention. In other words, the fresh water fishing industry has a favourable impact on Canada's international balance of trade. The factor of future economic stability is also worthy of note, to say nothing of the advertising factor. The fresh water fish from the great lakes have made a good name for Canada abroad and in

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]

the United States. The minister has said that we should, in our educational programming, encourage greater consumption of fish. I commend him for that statement and for his work along this line. Another part of this program should be directed toward conservation and better national housekeeping. There should be greater liaison and co-operation between the United States and Canadian governments, and through the international joint commission, in relation to the abatement and prohibition of pollution of the great lakes. I ask the minister to use his influence and that of all other bodies that have jurisdiction over these lakes, to bring about an improvement in these conditions which are certainly nothing of which we can be proud at the moment.

Mr. Fisher: There are only a few points I want to touch upon. I gather that my colleague has already made a similar suggestion to the one I made in connection with the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, when I argued this was basically a scientific department. I believe this argument applies also to the Department of Fisheries. It seems to me that one of the considerations this government should be giving is to a complete reorganization of the ministries and having, generally, a minister of science, particularly in terms of the applied sciences. Of course, we can think of all sorts of reorganizations. Obviously we will have to do something with the Department of Trade and Commerce and the Department of Industry clustering in each other's fields. It seems to me that fisheries, forestry and mines are three departments with which one could start, because their activities are primarily scientific and investigative rather than being in the political sphere or where they have political connotations in terms of the requirement of immediate political action. I think this should be seriously considered.

Some people may say, "It is all very well for you to make such a suggestion with regard to fisheries when you don't come from the maritimes and you don't have all this squid cutting and all the other problems in connection with the hand lines and so on," but I am not convinced that the maritime people, or the people who still depend on fishing for their income, would really be bereft or deprived of something if they stopped having a minister to report to, and instead had a general scientific agency to which to report, because it seems to me that aside from a rather small amount—and what appears to be a disappearing amount—of subsidies through