

Supply—Fisheries

reference to the importance of the Department of Fisheries in northern Canada. First of all, I should like to tell the minister that the work of the officers of his department in northern Canada is vastly underrated by his own department. I believe the role of the fisheries department, and that of the officers working in the field, have contributed a great deal to the development of our commercial domestic and sport fishing in the north. I need not say how important the industry is to northern Canada. When we examine the report of the commission of inquiry into fresh water fish marketing, we ascertain that 17 per cent of the white fish and 20 per cent of the lake trout caught in Canada come from the Northwest Territories. It is for this reason we welcome the report, particularly when we see the recommendations which propose some change in the marketing system now in vogue.

The report rightly points out that fishermen engaged in the inland fishery receive an unduly small share of the retail price. It is because of this factor that the people engaged in the fishing industry do not have the economic advantages that so many other Canadians have.

My basic purpose in rising today, Mr. Chairman, was to bring to the minister's attention a subject of which I know he is well aware, that is the future of the fishing industry in the town of Hay River and along the south shore of Great Slave lake. As a result of an outbreak of a disease during the past summer in a city in the United States, caused by the consumption of fish which came from the area of Great Slave lake, the United States government, although it has not taken any direct action, has indicated that should there be a further outbreak of this particular type of food poisoning, it is possible all fish products from Great Slave lake will be barred from entering the United States.

One effect of this action would be to reduce our foreign exchange by approximately \$2 million. In addition, the effect on the fishing industry of Great Slave lake as well as the town of Hay River, would be disastrous. The problem appears to be one related to conditions in the canneries. Whether or not this is a fact, I do not know, but I do suggest to the minister that, in conjunction with his colleagues in the cabinet, a solution must be found and found quickly. We do not know whether there will be another outbreak, but

we do know the difficulties that will result therefrom if there is another one.

A further point that is of concern to the people who live in the north relates to the future of the domestic fishery, and we mean the fishery in which the Indian and Eskimo people are engaged. There has been some difficulty and a lot of disappointment over the lakes which have been opened up to commercial fishermen, a procedure which has deprived many of our indigenous people of an opportunity to earn their livelihood. In most cases there has been consultation with the Indian and Eskimo people concerned. However, there are instances in which the department has opened up lakes to commercial fishermen without consultation with the Indian or Eskimo people. I urge the minister to look into this matter to ensure that the traditional rights of our first Canadians are not tampered with as a result of administrative decisions.

I should like to point out, too, that sports fishing in the Northwest Territories has become a major industry during the last five years. This industry, too, is significant in terms of earning foreign exchange for Canada. Fishermen from Minneapolis or Chicago are willing to spend \$1,000 for equipment and expenses to visit one of our exciting and charming lakes in the north in order to take home a trophy fish. It is no wonder therefore that the northern lakes and rivers are exciting and attractive places for United States sportsmen. I should like to think that the Department of Fisheries will continue its excellent work in opening up new areas for sports fishing. The effect of this on the Canadian economy is sufficiently important that it deserves the serious attention of the Department of Fisheries.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the member for Victoria (B.C.) suggested that possibly next spring he might accompany the minister on a seal hunt in the lower St. Lawrence. Perhaps the minister may bring with him as well a great expert in seal hunting, one of those people who have had centuries, not just generations, of experience in seal hunting. I have participated in a seal hunt with the Eskimo people, and I have yet to see any cause for concern on the part of those people who seem to be concerned about conditions which are alleged to exist in the St. Lawrence. I should like to think that the minister might bring along with him one or two of the great Eskimo seal hunters to let them explain to us