

*Commercial Fisheries Development*

proposed in the estimates of the current fiscal year are amounts developed on the basis of programs certainly prior to the time the bill was introduced in the house, and possibly prior to the time when the decision was made by the government to have it introduced at this session. I ask that question because, as I say, I feel it is significant from the point of view of giving us some idea concerning what expansion is envisaged in the program of fishery development as between the federal government and the provinces or as between the federal government and other agencies which may be involved in fishery development as a result of the proposals in this bill.

I should like to say, Mr. Chairman, that in this particular connection I naturally am concerned about the role the government of the province of British Columbia—the province from which I come—is going to play in the proposals outlined in this bill. Both inside and outside the house I previously have pointed out that at the federal-provincial fisheries conference, if my recollection serves me correctly, the province of British Columbia was the only one not represented at the ministerial level. In view of the relative importance of the fishery in British Columbia I felt this perhaps was rather unfortunate, and that on the surface at least it indicated some lack of interest and concern on the part of the government of British Columbia in the economic future of British Columbia's fishery.

I am aware that since that time a special report on fishery matters was prepared under the auspices of the government of British Columbia and submitted to a special committee on fisheries at the last session of the British Columbia legislature. This report which was prepared by Mr. McMynn, who now is on the staff of the Department of Recreation and Conservation of British Columbia, gives a comprehensive review of the fisheries situation in British Columbia. I think it underlines some of the apparent lack of interest, however. I am going to make a brief reference, if I may, to the report submitted by Mr. McMynn to the legislative committee. In part he has this to say:

A general conclusion which seems apparent from the above concerns the present and future role of the province in the commercial fisheries of British Columbia. Until 1957 the British Columbia Department of Fisheries provided a diversified and important service to the industry. Today, the commercial fisheries branch serves mainly as a licensing agency. The deputy minister of the Department of Fisheries formerly exerted considerable influence on matters of vital concern to the fishing

[Mr. Barnett.]

industry. He was recognized as the provincial government spokesman and adviser on fishing matters. In this position he facilitated a close and effective working liaison between the federal Department of Fisheries, the provincial Department of Fisheries, and the several provincial departments and international agencies associated with commercial and sport fisheries.

Since 1957 the important function of government-industry liaison has decreased. There is no longer a provincial Department of Fisheries, and consequently the province has little administrative or jurisdictional involvement in the management of her marine fisheries. Notwithstanding the foregoing, British Columbia should ensure that future exploitation of its fisheries is in the provincial interest. To do so will require greater provincial participation, particularly in view of rapidly increasing demands upon the fisheries resource by commercial and sport fishermen and by competing water users.

I hope that the submission of this report and the consideration given to it by the legislative committee in British Columbia perhaps will be a milestone in the sense of restoring at least the level of interest in the commercial and sport fishery which formerly was held by the government of British Columbia. Indeed I would go further and say that if the purposes of this bill are to be met, at least so far as British Columbia is concerned, the provincial authority is going to have to proceed much further than it ever has in the past in respect of the kind of interest it takes in the commercial fishery.

I know the minister made reference to the federal-provincial fisheries committee and I hope perhaps he might give us some indication of the type of work this committee now has in hand in relation to the existing situation so far as the operation of the government of British Columbia is concerned. I might say also, Mr. Chairman, I am a little concerned in my own mind with regard to what the immediate result of the passage of this bill may be in British Columbia, because of some of the references in the report made by the special fisheries committee to the legislature. They recommend that a provincial ministry of fisheries be reinstated as part of the government of British Columbia and that there be provincial participation on the federal fisheries board and at federal conferences. However, they make this somewhat contingent upon a clarification of the jurisdictional situation as between the federal and provincial governments. They suggest it is only if the government of British Columbia is given greater jurisdiction that increased provincial participation should take place.

We all know that when it comes to the bringing forward of any formal proposal in