

amending the Bank Act. Section 88 as amended contains a provision in paragraph (i) of subsection 1 to provide for loans to fishermen. This subsection is for the purpose of making credit more available to fishermen by empowering the banks to take security on fish, fishing equipment and supplies, and fishing vessels. The proposed new paragraph is necessary to enable the banks to assist in a general programme for the development of the fishing industry. There is a similar provision to this to assist the farmers; but in order to assist the farmers and as a supplement a bill called the Farm Improvement Loan Act has been introduced in this house. No similar bill has been introduced in this house to assist the fishermen, and to supplement the amendment to the Bank Act in order that the fishermen may be enabled to get loans at a much lower rate of interest than they formerly had to pay. I know the minister is interested in the welfare of the fishermen. We have about thirty thousand men engaged in the fishing industry in the maritime provinces. They with their families make up about one-sixth of the population of those provinces. Would the minister keep that matter in mind and use his influence to have a bill similar to the Farm Improvement Loan Act introduced by the government to assist the fishermen of not only the maritime provinces but all other parts of Canada?

I also call his attention to the fact that we have been informed that legislation is to be introduced to put a floor under prices of staple farm products. If the government is to introduce legislation of that kind it seems to me that it will only be right and proper for the fishermen throughout Canada to have similar legislation passed to enable them to have a floor under their products. I call that to the minister's attention and ask him if he will be so kind as to keep it in mind and endeavour to have legislation of that kind passed to assist the fishermen of Canada?

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): Both of these problems are being studied very carefully in the department at the present time. With regard to the loan act, we have an economist in the field who is studying the situation and conditions, and we may arrive at the conclusion that we should have a similar measure for the fishermen. As the hon. member knows we have been asked to act in conjunction with the government of Nova Scotia. We have passed an order in council providing for a subsidy for dragger boats and long-liner boats. I cannot give all the particulars of the correspondence at the moment since we

are not through yet. We have not arrived at a final decision, but we are studying the problem.

As to the stable price it might be a more difficult question than that with regard to agricultural products, because quality counts much more in fish products than it does in agricultural products. The price of good fresh fish which is landed and brought on the market fresh is not such a problem, because the fish sells very easily. One of the great difficulties in the industry is to bring the product on the market in the best possible condition. This market may be in Montreal or at some other place. Then we export a great deal of our product and we have to be very careful in setting a stable price. But we are studying the question to-day and giving a great deal of attention to it.

Mr. HAZEN: It may be very difficult to arrive at the proper form of legislation, but it is of much importance, perhaps of greater importance to the fishermen to have a floor price set on their products than it is to the farmers to have one set on theirs. I know that in New Brunswick the fishermen had a difficult time prior to the war. They found it very hard to make a living, and so far as they are concerned it is much more important that there be legislation of this kind enacted for their benefit than for the farmers. That is only natural.

Item agreed to.

71. Building fishways and clearing rivers, \$7,000.

Mr. GRAYDON: I have a matter I should like to bring up, but I do not know whether or not this is the proper item. I am afraid this is not the item. I wish to ask a question about the position and development and relationship between the provincial government and the dominion government with respect to the Gorton Pew processing plant at Caraquet, New Brunswick. Perhaps I should bring it up under another item.

Mr. BLACKMORE: What fishways are being constructed at the present time? On what fishways will this money be spent in 1944?

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): We are not building any fishways at the present time. This amount of \$7,000 is only to keep in good condition the fishways we have, and to pay the employees we have there. We are preparing a programme for the post-war period; as a matter of fact an order in council has been passed under which we are asking for