

represent them in this House, and I hope I can justify the confidence they have shown.

It is customary in the throne speech debate for a member to speak about his own constituency and to extol its beauty and other merits, and as well to sing the praises of the Canadians who are fortunate enough to live there. About the riding of Northumberland-Miramichi, I can do this with the utmost sincerity. The Miramichi River intersects it from east to west for over 100 miles. This, together with its many branches leading north and south, serves to make the river the dominant geographical factor as well as a leading economic consideration in the riding. Almost 90 per cent of its population lives within a few miles of its shores. Our people have settled along its banks not only because of its beauty, and it is a beautiful river, but because their livelihood either directly or indirectly depends upon it.

• (1240)

While economic conditions are relatively good on the Miramichi, I would be remiss in my duty to my constituency if I did not bring up certain economic problems that we face. I will confine myself, Mr. Speaker, and rather briefly, to two of these problems before coming to my main remarks on the Speech from the Throne. We are fortunate in having two pulp mills located at Newcastle and Nelson-Miramichi. We also have a plywood manufacturing plant and a chipboard plant. All of these wood-using industries depend to a large extent on water transportation to market their product, chiefly in the European markets. Transportation and the cost of transportation are perhaps the most serious problems these pulp mills face.

There is, of course, the cost of transportation of the raw material to the mills. The source of supply is yearly becoming more distant as the closer stands of timber are depleted. This, however, is a problem faced by all pulp mills in Canada to a greater or lesser degree. But the most costly transportation problem is that of water transportation to market. This cost on the Miramichi is greatly increased by the shallow draft of the bay and river. This means that only small ships are able to enter the river and proceed upstream to the wharves at Newcastle and Chatham. The cost per ton to move the product in small ships is of course much higher. Moreover, such small ships are becoming scarce and difficult and expensive to charter.

At this time pulp mills throughout Canada, as I think hon. members know, are suffering economically. The problem results from the higher cost of raw materials and wages coupled with the lower price for their product as a result of the strength of the Canadian dollar in comparison with that of the U.S. dollar. My concern is that the high cost of water transportation for the pulp mills in my region may mean the difference between those pulp mills in my constituency being viable operations which will continue or uneconomic operations forced to close.

You may ask, Mr. Speaker, what concern this is of the government of Canada, or in what way the federal government ought to be involved in this problem. The answer is simple. For many years shippers and those depending directly or indirectly on our resource industries have been requesting the Department of Public Works to do a proper dredging job and to open up a shipping channel to a depth

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of 26 feet. The cost is considerable, cost estimates in excess of \$5 million having been made. This cost, however, would be small compared with the economic dislocation and unemployment that would be consequent upon the closure of these industries. Ore concentrates are also shipped to European markets by water through the port of Miramichi and the shippers involved are also experiencing difficulties as a result of lack of adequate depth in the bay and river. Many studies have been made by the Department of Public Works, and lately my constituents and I have been trying to enlist the support of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion to go ahead with the dredging. I ask both departments I have mentioned to give the project top priority for 1973.

The other problem that I want to touch on briefly which has caused considerable economic hardship is the ban on commercial salmon fishing in eastern Canada. The imposition of this ban was a serious step affecting, as it did, the livelihood of hundreds of fishermen and their families. Nevertheless, I agreed with the minister when he announced the closure of the fishery. He was acting on the best scientific evidence available which indicated that the ban was necessary to preserve this wonderful and valuable species. Runs had been declining steadily and rapidly since 1967, especially the runs of large adult salmon. During the summer of 1972 salmon runs were much improved over those of 1971. This led many fishermen to feel that the ban had been unnecessary. I am personally convinced that the 1972 improvement in runs reflects the normal five-year salmon cycle. The 1972 runs represent the return of the salmon hatched in 1967. That run, also, of course, must reflect the effects of the ban on the Port aux Basques fishery which historically took many fish destined for New Brunswick rivers.

During the election campaign the Leader of the New Democratic Party visited Newcastle in my riding, where he participated in an open line radio program. During this program he was asked what he thought of the ban on commercial fishing for salmon. He replied to the effect that he believed there should be a ban on the sport fishery if there was to be one on the commercial fishery. I feel sure, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. gentleman did not realize the economic benefits brought to the province of New Brunswick by the sports fishery and did not realize that hundreds of guides and outfitters would be out of work if a ban on the sport fishery were imposed. I am sure the government of New Brunswick could ill afford the considerable loss of revenue that would be entailed in such ban. I feel that such a complete ban would not be justified in view of the relatively small percentage of total runs taken by anglers. This percentage was estimated by the former department of fisheries, now the Department of the Environment, at about 5 per cent. This contrasts with 86 per cent, again estimated by the department, as taken by fisheries of all kinds, including the Greenland fishery, the Port aux Basques fishery and the drift and set fisheries of the Miramichi. This left, if the figures are correct, an escapement of only 9 per cent for spawning purposes. A general rule cited by conservationists is that an escapement for spawning in the order of 30 or 40 per cent is required and is essential to ensure the perpetuation of any species.