

Adjournment Debate

since the question was about the marketing of freshwater fish, which problem has been with us for many, many years. In fact, it has been with us since the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation was established. I am afraid it will be with us for some time to come unless action is taken quickly by the Minister of Fisheries. I realize that cod and tuna are in the limelight; but I think that white fish and trout should also have their day in court.

The problem with FFMC is that it has a monopoly. The fishermen are not allowed to sell fish to any other body than the FFMC. No competition in the industry is allowed. It is forbidden to Canadian citizens to become buyers, sellers or dealers of freshwater fish in the parts of the country to which the FFM Act applies. New marketing ideas cannot be tried because of the FFMC. Fishermen in my part of the country, in the Northwest Territories, feel that they have been neglected by FFMC, which tends to concentrate on the Lake Winnipeg area.

We produce a premium product that ought to be sold for premium prices. But we fear that our top quality fish has been used in some way to subsidize the lower quality Manitoba production. That may or may not be true. But unless there is competition, and people are allowed to try new marketing ideas, we will never know for sure.

● (1810)

I can assure you that the state of the NWT fishing industry is desperate. It depends on continued subsidies to keep it going, about \$.5 million a year from the territorial Government alone. That was not the case when private enterprise was in the business of selling fish. Now there is bureaucratic regulation rather than an open market system.

The Senate report was a very thorough study. Under the Hon. Jack Marshall, the Senate committee travelled widely throughout the freshwater country. They went to Hay River in the Northwest Territories, received the advice of territorial government fishermen's organizations and a wide variety of the general public. The local press contained a number of articles, and the report was favourably received. This was an illustration of the Senate doing its job. There was excellent work done by this conscientious Senate committee. The committee came up with a series of good recommendations. In my opinion, they pulled the punches a little bit. They could have been more straightforward, but they did a good job.

The committee's recommendation 13(b) was probably the most important in that report. That recommendation recommended the licensing of private fish dealers, and the return of private enterprise to the fish business. People are out there who are ready and willing to do this once the authorization has been given. Not long ago I was talking to some Chinese friends who told me that white fish that are salted in a special way command a price in Hong Kong of about \$8 a pound. They would like to get into the business of specially salting this fish. Presently the fishermen receive a few cents a pound for the product, so there is a new market that needs to be tapped.

We need authorization by the Minister so that this licensing can take place, and private enterprise can be brought back into the business. It is my considered opinion that unless private enterprise and competition is not brought back into the northern fishery, that fishery will perish. Of that there is no doubt.

Mr. Bud Bradley (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson) has asked for the Government's response to the interim report on the freshwater fisheries that was prepared by the Senate Committee on Fisheries. I applaud the concern shown by the Hon. Member for his constituents and for freshwater fishermen throughout the West. His knowledge in this field is unquestioned in the House, and the Minister thanks him for his input on issues of this nature.

To date that committee has published only the first of a series of interim reports entitled *The Marketing of Fish in Canada*. Although the report is entitled marketing of fish, it contains some 20 wide ranging recommendations. They deal with such issues as resource management, federal, provincial and territorial matters, the mandate of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, and, of course, marketing.

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation was established in 1969 at the request of provincial Governments for the purpose of bringing order to the marketing of freshwater fish products, and increasing returns to the approximately 3,500 fishermen involved in these fisheries.

Since 1969, the Corporation has been successful in meeting the objectives of its mandate, as indicated in the annual reports of the Corporation which have been tabled in the House each year.

The Corporation continues to enjoy the support of the participating Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, and the Northwest Territories. It also enjoys the support of the vast majority of the fishermen in the Corporation's territory. Officials in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have examined the recommendations with great care.

● (1815)

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) has written to the distinguished Senate committee Chairman giving his views on the report. The Department is currently in the process of implementing many of the recommendations contained in the report. Subsequent reports dealing with the Atlantic and Pacific fisheries will receive the same attention and scrutiny, so that, as the Hon. Member mentioned, we can consider cod, salmon, white fish and trout.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION—LIBERAL PARTY
CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, the present Progressive Conservative Government is firmly committed to peace and to nuclear disarmament. That