

*Supply—Fisheries and Forestry*

give before that his department will be able to grant retroactive pay increases to national defence employees before the end of the year?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of doing so. I have been in consultation with the Minister of National Defence, who is primarily charged with the responsibility of making the computations in order to get the cheques out.

**EXTERNAL AID****BIAFRA—SUGGESTED SPECIAL ACCOUNT FOR PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General. In view of the initiative taken by the government of the Netherlands in allowing persons to open special post office accounts, which enables that country to use its post office facilities to bring relief to Biafra, will our government consider allowing something similar to happen in this country so as to encourage contributions to be made to this worth-while cause?

**Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I can only applaud the initiative of the Netherlands post office, but it is not possible for us to emulate this activity. As you know, we do not operate the gyro banking system which they have in many European countries, which enables depositors to pay their bills directly and make deposits for such worthy causes as the hon. member has mentioned. It may be something for one of the task forces to review, but at the present time we cannot act.

● (11:50 a.m.)

**SUPPLY**

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Faulkner in the chair.

**The Chairman:** Order. House again in committee of supply, revised estimates of the Department of Fisheries and Forestry for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1969. Vote No. 1 will be found at page 158 of the bluebook. Details thereof are listed at page 160.

**DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND FORESTRY**

1. Departmental administration, including grants and contributions as detailed in the Estimates. \$3,509,175.

**Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries):** Mr. Chairman, in my opening statement I

want to make one thing quite clear, and that is that Canada's fishing industry—and I am talking first about the industry in the over-all sense of the word—is not on the verge of collapse. It has had a record year in 1968 and it is going on to better things in 1969. It is true that certain important sectors of the industry, more particularly the groundfish industry on the east coast, are encountering difficulties, but by and large the situation is favourable to the industry. Quantities are up, prices in respect of most fish products are higher than they were in recent years, and productivity is continuing to improve. Nineteen sixty eight, when all the results are in, will show that it has been the best year in Canada's fishing history; I repeat, the best year in Canada's fishing history.

This assessment is based on hard statistics for the first nine months of 1968, that is, from January to the end of September inclusive. They show that our total catch is up 10 per cent in quantity terms over the corresponding period in 1967. They also show that the earnings of fishermen are up. Their earnings are up by roughly 12 per cent over a year ago. This upward movement in quantity, in gross dollar value and in fishermen's incomes is consistent with the long run trend in the record of the industry.

No doubt, Mr. Chairman, we need more perspective in these matters. In the ten year period from 1956 to 1966 Canada's total output from the fisheries grew by 18 per cent. Returns to fishermen meanwhile rose by 67 per cent in value terms, this despite a decline in the employment. Productivity by fishermen in quantitative terms, in the sense of numbers of fish caught, has improved by more than 2 per cent a year. This is a rate of improvement in productivity which has been comparable with and in some sectors of the industry better than, that of the rest of the economy, so that in terms of efficiency, and again I am generalizing, the industry has been doing quite well.

These figures apply to the nation as a whole, but one might expect large variations from one part of the industry to the other and from one part of the country to the other. During the last 12 months solid gains, again speaking over all, have been made in the Atlantic region. Out on the Pacific coast, and this is largely due to a decline in the halibut catch, our performance has been off somewhat. However, production of salmon has been up in quantity and dollar terms.

Marketing has presented a problem. It has certainly presented a problem in price terms