

*Supply—Fisheries*

I recently heard the rumour, and I have written to the minister to this effect, that there is a movement afoot to concentrate the offices of the Department of Fisheries—I speak here of the province of Quebec—in an area 450 miles away from the fishing communities. It seems to me that here we have a situation similar to that which we have witnessed in connection with the Unemployment Insurance Commission. For years we have been speaking of decentralization and now we are coming back to centralization.

I am not going into the U.I.C. aspect of this question, but so far as the fisheries are concerned it seems to me that the officers of the department, who must be in constant touch with the fishermen, must have their working place in the area of the fisheries. I would not want us to start a system whereby we will be putting administration on wheels because this would be rather expensive for our country. I hope the minister can assure me that no such move is afoot.

In this connection, at the committee stage I spoke about the technological station at Grand River where there are all the facilities necessary to benefit the fishermen. However, it has been pointed out to me recently that at this station there is no bacteriologist. I would point out what this means to the clam industry, for example. Clam fishermen have to send their clams to a laboratory in Montreal in order that they may be analysed. I know of two cases where the report on the clams was received 30 days late; in other words, the report was received 30 days after the clams were canned.

Hon. members can imagine how serious this situation is when large quantities of clams have been canned and one month later it is discovered that the clams must be destroyed. Then the officers of the Department of Fisheries have to go to the stores and take the clams off the shelves, and the poor producer loses a considerable amount of money. No fisherman on the Atlantic seaboard can afford to lose a whole month's production. Therefore I hope the minister will consider engaging a bacteriologist in that area during the fishing season.

● (3:30 p.m.)

It was also brought to my attention that the Prices Support Board is to help the fishing industry in Lake Erie, and in particular to help those who are fishing the yellow perch. The reason for this is that the fishermen there have received about 3 cents a

pound for their perch instead of 10 cents. If I went back to my riding and told our people that the yellow perch from Lake Erie was fetching a price of 10 cents while my constituents received only about 3 cents and no subsidy, for the sea perch or red perch from the Atlantic, I think I would be in trouble were I to support such a measure. Therefore, for the benefit of our fishermen and for my own information, I would like to hear from the minister the reasons for the price support of the yellow perch in lake Erie.

I would also like to raise the question of insurance being paid by the lobster fishermen in the Atlantic region. I will not question the charges being paid in all the regions of the east because I think the government contribution was a worth-while one, one which has helped the industry to insure the traps used by lobster fishermen at a very low price.

It is rather difficult to understand why three different prices should be charged or three different deductions allowed when claims are made in the three regions in the province of Quebec, namely the north shore of the St. Lawrence, the Gaspé area and the Magdalen islands. If we applied the same principle to the insurance business it would mean that we would have a different rate and a different amount deductible in each region and in each part of Canada. It seems to me that if we are to issue insurance policies to the lobster trap fishermen, we should at least set a uniform price and a uniform amount deductible because these sums range from 25 per cent on the north shore to 40 per cent in the Gaspé peninsula, and 20 per cent in the Magdalen islands, all within an area of 100 miles. I know the minister will say that there are more lobster traps in the Magdalen islands and that more revenue comes from there. Nevertheless this just goes to show that uniform prices should be set on the claims that are made by the fishermen from the Gaspé peninsula who have lobster traps and who are suffering more than others, owing to the inclemency of the weather.

May I also deal briefly with assistance to fishermen who experienced serious catch failures in 1966. The reason for that may not always have been due as much to the price of the product as to the lack of facilities or to the changes in the weather. However, it is a fact that in certain areas of the east fishermen cannot practise their trade. What I am saying now may have to do with another department such as the Department of Public Works, but it seems to me there is a lack of