

Mr. REID: We had a fish board in British Columbia up to 1937, but it did not work out very well. It was found, after it was set up, that as most of the salted fish went to the orient the salt fish board in British Columbia was controlled by the orientals, and they fixed a quota most of which went to their own nationals. Would the minister indicate clearly whether the powers of this board will be compulsory along the line of the powers given under the Natural Products Marketing Act of 1937?

Mr. MICHAUD: It is not a compulsory act.

Mr. MANION: I shall say only a few words now because I feel the question can better be discussed after the bill is introduced. I am pleased to see anything being done that may be of assistance to the fishermen on the Atlantic coast particularly, though of course those in need on the Pacific coast should be given equal consideration. I had the opportunity in the past few years of travelling along the Gaspé coast, and along the Atlantic coast in the maritimes, and the conditions I found there were so pitiable and the hardships so evident that anything we can do in this house, as I stated earlier in the session, to help these fishermen should certainly be done. I really believe that they have been suffering under conditions much worse than those of many for whom we have been caring, and I am delighted to see anything done to help these fishermen because undoubtedly they have had an extremely hard time. I remember motoring along the Gaspé coast and coming to little villages where up until a few years ago they had extremely good opportunities for exporting their fish products, but at the time I motored through there they told me that practically the whole of their market was gone; they were shut off from the European market.

The other remark I wished to make was this. This government is prone to claim that it can solve this problem and that problem by trade, by expanding export markets. I do not want to be misquoted as belittling export markets. I believe that so far as we can keep them we should keep them, and secure more and enlarge them, but the complaints coming this morning from followers of the government, the junior member for Halifax, for instance, as well as from the hon. member for Comox-Alberni and others to the effect that markets have been lost, illustrates the need of doing something more than depending almost wholly upon export markets to solve such problems as unemployment and distress in this country.

[Mr. Michaud.]

Mr. MacINNIS: I do not think the minister answered the questions asked by the hon. member for Vancouver North and the hon. member for Vancouver South in regard to fisheries on the Pacific coast. Will they be on a parity with those on the Atlantic coast under this scheme or under any new development affecting the fishing industry?

Mr. MICHAUD: In so far as the need for help is there. This legislation is not simply for the purpose of helping the salt fisheries. It is for the purpose of helping the fishermen who otherwise would be in need of public assistance to sustain them and their dependents. If we find on the Pacific coast a situation that should be relieved, certainly it will be taken care of.

Mr. PELLETIER: It must not be thought that I or the members in this group are not in favour of assisting the fishing industry both on the Atlantic and on the Pacific. The junior member for Halifax will find that the member for Peace River and those associated with him in this group will be only too glad to vote whatever amount the government thinks necessary for the purpose. What I had in mind was not that assistance should not be given, but rather to point out to the government how dangerous it is to base your economic philosophy upon export markets which can vanish from time to time. I realize that it is not customary to go into lengthy discussion at this stage, but there are a few things I should like to say, not because I am very familiar with the industry, but because of the principle involved. I thank the junior member for Halifax for the delicate manner in which he told me that I knew nothing about the fishing industry, but I am aware of the fact, without needing to know much about the fishing industry, that fishermen on the Atlantic coast and elsewhere have suffered greatly because of the depression. There is a principle involved which I should like to discuss when the time comes, with respect to giving assistance that has become necessary because of the breakdown of a false philosophy respecting markets which have vanished. I can assure the junior member for Halifax that he will find this group quite ready to vote whatever amount is required to assist the fishermen.

Mr. NEILL: The minister has stated that the purpose of this resolution and of the bill to be founded upon it is to help the fishermen in destitute circumstances in the maritime provinces, a most laudable ambition and one in which we must all join. When I suggested that the scope of the bill might be extended to cover conditions on the Pacific