

*Farm Credit Act*

agency of the federal government making direct loans to fishermen comparable to those made by the Farm Credit Corporation to farmers.

I know that the Minister of Fisheries and others have said on several occasions, apologetically, that there are various provincial agencies making such loans, implying thereby that there is no need for any federal agency. My reply to that is of course that there are lots of provincial agencies, including one mentioned by the minister this morning—that is to say, the one in Quebec which make loans to farmers. If this is the excuse for no action on the part of the government, it is not a valid excuse. Moreover, we know that in four provinces at any rate—and I refer to the Atlantic provinces—the credit that it is possible for those provinces to make available is very small, because of the financial situation and the taxable capacity of those provinces, and there is every bit as great a need for federal action for loans to fishermen, over and above those which are available under the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act, as there is for loans to farmers.

This discrimination is not appreciated by the fishing industry and by the fishermen. It seems to me, sir, that when we are considering whether it is expedient to introduce this legislation, I say yes, it is expedient to carry on with this legislation, but it would be even more expedient if the fishermen were treated in the same way as farmers are being treated. But they never have been so treated by the present government.

**Mr. MacLean (Queens):** Mr. Chairman, I should just like to add a word. I do not want to transgress the rules by speaking on another subject, but I should like to say to the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate that I think he will appreciate at once, with his keen mind, that the two situations are not comparable in all respects. This is not to say there is not plenty of room for improvement as far as development in the fishing industry is concerned, but as the Minister of Agriculture has already pointed out, a very high percentage of the loans to farmers under this legislation are for the purpose of purchasing land. This is the resource from which they produce food. In the case of fisheries the resource is in the public domain, even in the international domain, in most cases, and the fisherman has access to it merely by licence. I am sure the hon. member will appreciate that.

I should also like to point out that units of production are much more costly in the modern fishing industry. However, in that connection I would point out that this government is subsidizing the building of fishing

trawlers to the extent of 50 per cent of their total cost. We are providing bait service in the eastern provinces, and we are subsidizing the building of smaller ships. This is not an appropriate subject for discussion under this act, but I should like to pursue it further when the estimates of the Department of Fisheries are being dealt with.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I should like to make one very brief comment on what the Minister of Fisheries has said. We all know that the Minister of Fisheries is one of the members of the treasury benches who does not try to evade questions—and we all respect him for it—and who, when a matter of debate is raised, really tries to debate it fairly and honestly. I give him full credit on that score. However, I think the minister has forgotten one thing. It is quite true that the sea is open to everybody who can get there, but the only way in which a fisherman can fish is by having a boat. That boat is just as mortgageable—and I know this; I owned one once—as is a farm. It is perhaps more insurable in some cases than are some farms. It is precisely for the purchase of boats that this kind of legislation would be most valuable if it applied to fishermen.

Notwithstanding what the minister has said about the subsidy given to a certain type of trawler, the minister and I both know that the fishermen who need the loans most do not get that subsidy because they do not build boats of that size. Contrary to what the Minister of Transport said a couple of years ago before these subsidies were established, when he told us that they were going to cover all kinds of fishing vessels, when the regulations came out we found they did not do so.

However, there again, like the minister, I am going a little beyond the scope of this legislation. I will confine my remarks to one point, namely that the fishermen have every bit as much need, even if boats are partly subsidized, of loans to get modern boats as have the farmers for loans to modernize their operations, and there should be comparable legislation for that purpose.

**Mr. Barnett:** As a member coming from a constituency in which the fishery is of considerable consequence, I rise simply to say I find myself in sympathy with some of the remarks made by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate. In view of the rules of relevancy, my only further comment at this time is that in the days when I was trying to persuade his former colleague from Coast-Capilano, who was then minister of fisheries, of the need for some of this sort of thing, I could wish that he had lent some similar eloquence to the subject at that time.