

Supply—Fisheries

United States government which would seriously affect this important branch of Canadian industry but, as I said, I cannot speak for the United States government.

Mr. Stick: According to your reply, Mr. Minister, you cannot reassure us definitely on this matter. It is only your hope that increases will not be made.

Mr. Carier: Mr. Chairman, I also have a question arising out of the minister's statement and with the permission of the hon. member for Gloucester whom you have already recognized I will put my question now. On what does the minister base his hope?

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Chairman, I base my hope on the fact that there is constant consultation between the governments of the United States and Canada on all of these matters. It is true, of course, that the United States government operates on a different principle from the Canadian government and there is admittedly a strong lobby in the United States which is trying to bring about a condition which would be very detrimental to the Canadian industry. This has been going on for a number of years. Their attempts have not been successful from their point of view up until this time and there is some reason to believe that the situation in this regard has not deteriorated from our point of view. But as I said before, it is, of course, impossible for me to speak for the United States government and I should point out that this is a responsibility that is not mine, it is that of my colleague the Minister of Trade and Commerce. There has been and will be very close co-operation and reference to each other on these and other matters affecting the fishing industry.

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Chairman, at the outset I want to assure the hon. member for Halifax that the members of this committee were relieved and accepted his explanation of his quick vanishing from this chamber following the delivery of his out-house speech on fisheries. I feel the type of house I am mentioning may be more appropriate for this place than the one mentioned by the hon. member.

The hon. member for Halifax during the course of his remarks stated that it was the policy of the present government not to separate the maritime fishing communities from the rest of Canada. If we take into consideration the figures on unemployment which were released yesterday as at December 26, 1957, which show that some 698,000 are unemployed we can only conclude that the situation in the maritime fishing

[Mr. MacLean.]

communities is definitely no different from that which exists in the rest of Canada.

The hon. member also stated that according to the report of the Gordon commission the number of men engaged in the fishing industry had decreased in the last few years. This is only natural following the modernization of our fishing fleet and of the fishing operations in general.

I realize, Mr. Chairman, that the policy of the previous government in the last 20 years, especially as it affected the fishing industry, may not have been perfect. It may not have given to the fishermen and to the industry as a whole all the benefits that it could expect; but, after all, we have seen the fishing industry progress; we have seen the construction of a new fishing fleet in the Atlantic provinces, subsidized by grants from the federal government; we have seen cold storage facilities being constructed in the main fishing constituencies; we have seen the implementation of insurance on fishing gear and this year fishermen were accepted for unemployment insurance benefits.

The hon. member for Halifax also mentioned a series of public works projects which were undertaken in his constituency in recent months; but I think if the hon. member wants to be fair all he has to do is to look up the estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1958, and on page 65 he will find that under item No. 372 there is \$2,763,500 appropriated for such projects in his province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Chairman, notwithstanding the remark of the minister, I want to take advantage of this opportunity to congratulate him on his appointment to this important portfolio. I also want to congratulate him on his statement in introducing the estimates of his department. I am sure that those who have been in the position to meet the minister on his visits to the east and west coasts to familiarize himself with the establishment of his department and of the industry throughout the country must have at different times placed before him some of the problems facing the industry today. After all, an industry as important as the fisheries must have some problems.

However, I regret that in his brief visit to the east coast of New Brunswick the minister was unable to visit the fishing constituency and fishing establishments of Gloucester county. If I am correct, the fish dealers and processors of Gloucester county were invited last fall to go to Shediac in Westmorland county in order to meet the minister. I understand, however, that the time of the minister was taken up and that