

Votes 70, 75, 77, 80, and L180 relating to the National Harbours Board.

Votes 85, 90, and L185 relating to the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority.

To the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections

Vote 45 relating to the Chief Electoral Officer.

To the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

Votes 1, 5, 10, 20, 25, 30, 35, 38, 40, and 45 relating to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

To the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates

Vote 50 relating to the Auditor General.

Votes 1 and 5 relating to the Governor General and Lieutenant-Governors.

Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, and 20 relating to the Senate and the House of Commons.

Vote 25 relating to Library of Parliament.

Votes 1, 5, 10, and 15 relating to the Privy Council.

Vote 20 relating to the Science Council.

Vote 30 relating to the Public Service Staff Relations Board.

Votes 20, 25, L135, and L140 relating to the National Capital Commission.

Votes 80 and 85 relating to the Public Service Commission.

Votes 1, 5, 15, and 20 relating to the Department of Supply and Services.

Votes 30 and 35 relating to Canadian Arsenals Limited.

Vote 40 relating to the Canadian Commercial Corporation.

Votes 1, 5, and 10 relating to the Treasury Board.

Votes 15, 20, 25, and 30 relating to the National Research Council.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, we in this party do not intend to oppose the basis of the allocation. We have some reservations about some of the detail, particularly in respect of the new departments being set up. I can only add we hope that when the government has come to the stage when it concludes that the problem will be solved by means other than the creating of new departments we might not need quite as many of these references to committees.

Motion agreed to.

FISHERIES

PURCHASE PROGRAM TO STABILIZE FROZEN GROUND FISH MARKET

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, our Canadian groundfish industry, as many hon. members know, is in difficulties. It is in difficulties because the export price for a number of our frozen groundfish products has declined sharply since 1967. This industry, which sells close to

Stabilization of Frozen Groundfish Market
90 per cent of its output in the United States, is caught in a serious cost-price squeeze.

It is important to note that this squeeze has occurred despite the fact that the retail price for many of these products has continued to rise in the United States and elsewhere.

It is apparent, therefore, that the government's main objective must be to do what it can to bring about a permanent improvement in the marketing outlook for Canadian frozen groundfish products by reinforcing the industry's competitive position abroad. Such a program will be far more beneficial than short-term subsidies. The latter can create serious difficulties because of Canada's international agreements on tariffs and trade. Also, experience has shown that subsidies cause few, if any, long-term improvements in incomes and working conditions in the industry.

The government therefore proposes, by taking advantage of our fisheries prices support legislation, to enter the market itself. It proposes, in other words, to initiate a purchase program designed to strengthen and stabilize market prices for frozen groundfish products. Supplies accumulated in this way will eventually be sold through ordinary commercial channels. They will not be released, however, at prices less than those paid for these stocks in the first instance. Nor will they be sold until their export price is high enough to cover our basic costs of production in Canada.

These costs must include an adequate price to our Canadian fishermen. The government is not prepared to enter into any plan to assist the industry unless appropriate measures are taken to ensure that the fishermen share in the benefits. Close to 15,000 fishermen and plant workers, and their families, depend upon the Canadian groundfishery, and their welfare must be of primary concern to the government.

It is our intention to maintain a close and continuing liaison with representatives of the fishermen and the trade in order to devise means whereby fishermen can be assured of prices that will not fall below the average for the years 1965, 1966 and 1967.

● (2:40 p.m.)

The low market prices of recent years have put many plants in the position where they lack working capital. Some have had to close for this reason. Others are in a precarious position at present and lack the necessary funds to modernize their operations and to cut costs by improving productivity.