

*Saltfish Act*

ration was able to absorb its loss by depending on reserves it had built up for a rainy day. The Corporation has yet to cost the taxpayers a dime. It has been self-sufficient. The only place it gets its money or working capital is from the Government, but so far it has not run at a loss.

The Corporation is small and efficient. It has 48 full and part-time employees. It packages, markets and in some cases processes saltfish, which mainly consists of codfish but also includes pickled herring and salted salmon. It buys fish from agents, who are private entrepreneurs, and then markets the fish. The primary consuming countries to which the Corporation exports saltfish are Portugal and Puerto Rico, the latter country being part of the United States.

Unfortunately, since 1980, the last time that the Corporation had its limit of borrowing capacity raised, the devaluation of the European currencies against our Canadian currency has had a serious impact on the export of saltfish. The Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate mentioned this in his speech but he did not elaborate. Let me say something about it so that you understand it, Mr. Speaker. The Portuguese escudo is now worth one-third of what it was against the Canadian dollar in 1980. That is not bad for Canadian tourists—

**Mr. Fraser:** May I ask the Hon. Member a question, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No. The Hon. Member has the floor. The only way that could be done is with unanimous consent.

**Mr. Waddell:** Maybe the Minister will ask a question at the end of my remarks. Beware of Scotsmen asking questions, Mr. Speaker, as the English learned to their chagrin! The Minister and I have both been seen together in kilts, but I can tell you that I am the only one who has worn a kilt in the House of Commons. You can ask me that later.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Waddell:** Let me go back to the Portuguese escudo. The point is very important. The reason is that this currency has fallen in value *vis-à-vis* the Canadian dollar. Other European currencies have also fallen, such as the Italian lira and the Spanish peseta.

● (1200)

**Mr. Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Ordinarily I would not rise at this point, but in the interests of the democratic functions of the House I must ask the Hon. Member, who is well known to me and who wears the kilt, as I do, if he would consent to a question being asked.

**Mr. Waddell:** Certainly I would.

**Mr. Fraser:** Are you for the Bill or against it?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for the Minister to ask a question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Gauthier:** No.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** There is not unanimous consent.

**Mr. Waddell:** The Minister wants to know whether I am for the Bill or against it. We are for the Bill, and I am explaining why.

**Mr. Dick:** We were having trouble.

**Mr. Waddell:** The Hon. Member should not have trouble. There is something to learn from the Bill. What I am pointing out is that this Corporation is a successful Government Corporation. It had to take over from the free market which was not working in this particular case. Sometimes it works, but in this particular case it did not. The Minister has acknowledged that. This is very important because some time down the line in this Parliament we will have some problems.

**Mr. Dick:** Then why are you smiling throughout your speech?

**Mr. Waddell:** I say to the Hon. Member who is asking that question that he should look at the Government's report entitled "A New Direction for Canada". The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) indicated that it was "An Agenda for Economic Renewal". The Hon. Member should look at page 31 which indicates the failures of some commercial credit corporations in international marketing of products. One paragraph on that page reads:

Other Crown corporations which have an export-facilitation role include the Canadian Dairy Commission, the Canadian Saltfish Corporation, and the Canadian Freshwater Fish Corporation.

Then on page 32 it speculates as follows:

Is it clear that a need exists for other specialized services promoting the export of selected agricultural and fish products? Could this role be assumed by the private sector or by other established government programs?

I hope the Parliamentary Secretary will participate in this debate. I should like him to tell us whether the Government will privatize the Canadian Saltfish Corporation. If the Hon. Member does his homework and looks at this report, he will understand. Why is it mentioned in here beside the concept of the market not working and the idea of changing or getting rid of these corporations? This is why I mentioned it.

The reason I mentioned the Portuguese escudo was that I was trying to point out that one of the difficulties the Corporation had with marketing the product of fishermen from Newfoundland and the lower north shore of Quebec was that they have had to compete in a market where our currency has been over valued. The currencies of countries such as Norway and Iceland which compete with them have in fact been devalued. This makes the situation even worse.

I have been told—and I looked into it—that it is very difficult for us to cut costs here in Canada. The fishermen and processors of Newfoundland are making very little money. The average income from fishing activities in that area has been between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per year. A plant worker makes \$7.38 per hour, tops. This is not full-time, year-round work.