

Supply—Fisheries

months. We must not forget that the fishing season closes in October or November, and it is late for the fishermen to look elsewhere for employment. Let us hope that something will be done to remedy the situation and that we can count on the co-operation of the Department of Fisheries in this case.

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Chairman, I was interested in the minister's review of the fishing industry of the country. I should like also to congratulate his deputy minister upon having been appointed chairman of the international commission for the northwest Atlantic fisheries. With that congratulation goes an expression of my happiness concerning the site chosen for the headquarters of that organization which, we are told, is to be at Halifax. It is most fortunate that it should be in the maritime provinces. I am particularly interested in this organization because its activities cover the gulf of St. Lawrence, an area in which I am directly interested.

In the province from which I come, Prince Edward Island, while perhaps in terms of some other provinces the fishing industry is not large, it is of relatively great importance. In that province our chief industries are agriculture, fishing and the tourist industry. In an indirect way the fisheries are of interest to the tourists, and serve as an attraction to them.

I was interested in what the minister had to say with regard to the conservation of fish and other marine life, but I am not too sure that some of the solutions he suggested are as simple as the figures he gave would indicate. While the minister pointed out the amount of fish required to feed one seal, and that the amount of fish destroyed by seals was greater than that used for human consumption, I would observe that before the balance in nature was artificially disturbed by the colonization of North America, especially on the east coast, there were great numbers of seals. They were present at that time in much greater numbers than at present. Yet, the whole area was teeming with fish.

This was specially true of the gulf of St. Lawrence, not only in the matter of seals but also what we call sea cows, and other marine animals which feed on the fish. If the reason given by the minister were the only explanation, or even one of the main reasons for the depletion of the numbers of fish, the supply would have been depleted at that time.

I think one of the reasons our natural wealth in fish has been depleted is perhaps a more obscure one. It is possible that it may be due to the pollution of our streams, or to other causes of that kind which are not so readily seen. I would hope that there will be

success in any endeavours made to restore the potential fishing wealth of the gulf of St. Lawrence to something approaching what it was a few years ago, or perhaps what it was a great many years ago.

While it may not be generally known, the fact is that when eastern Canada was first colonized, or when the coasts of that part of Canada were first fished by European fishermen, one of the greatest fishing grounds was that of the gulf of St. Lawrence, and it is said that it compared favourably at that time with the Grand Banks. During the sixteenth century the gulf of St. Lawrence was perhaps the greatest whaling area in the whole world, and attracted large numbers of whalers. As the minister has said, today no whaling is carried on along the east coast.

In the middle part of the sixteenth century large numbers of Basque sailors came annually to hunt whales in the gulf. Perhaps hon. members would pardon me if I were to substantiate this point by quoting from some early personal observations of conditions in the gulf of St. Lawrence as they are set out in volume VIII of Hakluyt's *Voyages*. The first has to do with a voyage of Charles Leigh and divers others to Cape Breton and the isle of Ramea who, in 1597, passed through the Magdalen islands and entered the gulf of St. Lawrence. Speaking of their first entry of the gulf he states:

In that place we caught great store of cods, which were larger and better fish then any in Newfoundland.

Later on he says:

And upon the lesse of these Islands of Birds—

And the Bird islands were discussed yesterday in reference to their use as a bird sanctuary.

—we saw great store of Morsses or Sea Oxen, which were a sleepe upon the rockes: but when we approched nere unto them with our boate they cast themselves into the sea and pursued us with such furie as that we were glad to flee from them.

Apparently they were in a small boat.

The 16 we arrived at Brians Island, which lyeth 5 leagues West from the Islands of Birds. About this island ther is as great abundance of cods as in any place can be found. In little more then an houre we caught with 4 hookes 250 of them.

Then in 1534 Jacques Cartier had this to say about his entrance to the gulf of St. Lawrence:

A point of land being passed about a league from white Sand, there is a port and passage found called the Islettes, a better place then white Sand: and there is great fishing.

And then again, speaking of his observations made just after leaving the baie de Chaleur, he wrote:

In the meane time wee sawe a great multitude of wilde men that were fishing for mackerels, whereof there is great store.