

APPENDIX No. 3

By Dr. Stewart (Lunenburg):

Q. You could buy a whole quintal of codfish for that, enough to keep them going for a month?—A. Yes.

By the Chairman:

Q. Do you consider the quality of fish as you get it here, and deliver to your customers' homes as being fresh fish?—A. At the present time we are getting very little fresh fish. Last week I had fresh fish from Lockeport and Canso; the Lockeport haddock was line caught and it was away ahead of the other. You cannot always get that kind of fish.

Q. Was it frozen?—A. No, sir, it was fresh. Here is a telegram I got yesterday from Lockeport from a firm with whom I placed an order on the 28th of February. "First haddock seven days just in, five cents, wire quantity you want."

Q. That means five cents a pound?—A. On the coast, yes.

Q. What would it cost to land it here in Ottawa?—A. About \$1.40 before I can open the box. The same man telegraphed a few days ago as follows: "Have only two cases fancy haddock, five cents, weather bad, immediate acceptance."

Q. Weather conditions affect the catch of fish?—A. Yes.

Q. And that reflects itself on the retail market here?—A. Yes. We could use more fish if we could get it.

Q. Is there a demand for fish now on days other than Fridays and fast days?—A. Well, not a great demand, without making some special effort. This week we made a special effort by advertising special prices for the national fish day.

Q. Is there any co-operation between the various retailers here in giving their orders?—A. No, we all order independently.

Q. Do you think by co-operating and consolidating your shipments that you could lessen the cost of transportation by getting better rates, carload lot rates let us say?—A. I do not doubt but what we could, but it would look like a combine, and people would get suspicious.

Q. Of course, you would not combine as a matter of fact to enhance prices?—A. We would combine to save expense.

Q. Would you feel like telling the Committee what the average profit is here now on, say, a hundred pounds of fish?—A. I understand that the expenses of our stores average about 20 per cent, our overhead expenses.

Q. That is 20 per cent of the turnover?—A. I am not speaking now of the fish in all cases. We have so many meat stores. And I know that many of these stores some months do not show a profit at all. My own store generally shows a little profit, but not very much. So I presume the profit must be somewhere around 25 per cent.

Q. Of which 20 per cent goes for overhead charges?—A. Yes.

Q. Leaving a profit of 5 per cent on the turnover. That is about all you can expect under present conditions?—A. Yes.

Q. Do you know of any way whereby conditions can be improved so that the spread in price between the cost of fish at the seacoast and the cost to the retailer could be reduced?—A. Well, I think it is a matter for the retailer's conscience. Many of the fish prices now are the same prices the fish was sold at many years ago, and while other foods have been going up in price fish has been costing the dealer a little more, but he did not put up the price because he was getting a fair price before.

Q. You were pointing out that there were large overhead charges, expense of transportation, and a local rate superimposed upon a through rate; and I asked you whether you think there is any way whereby some of that cost could be lessened?—A. If we could bring all our fish from the coast by freight instead of by express, we would save considerable; but we cannot depend on the freight service.

Q. Do you think from what you know of the difficulties of the retail trade that the retailers would be willing to get together and consolidate their shipments and bring

MR. THOMAS BINNS.