

amend the Meat and Canned Foods Act, Mr. Boivin in the Chair.

Mr. COPP: Mr. Chairman, it is not my desire to offer any factious opposition to the resolution, but I feel that the minister has not given a sufficiently satisfactory argument to this committee why it should be passed at the present time. He tells us that some time last summer the lobster packers of the Maritime Provinces, in conclave at Halifax, had come to the conclusion that some change should be made in the Meat and Canned Foods Act by decreasing the amount of dry lobster meat that they should be required to place in a pound, three-quarter pound, half-pound, or quarter-pound cans. During the dinner recess I looked up the Act of 1907 which provides for making regulations in regard to canned meats and foods. In that Act I could not find any regulation by which the container, or can, should contain a certain number of ounces of dry lobster meat.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: There was no legislation prior to 1917.

Mr. COPP: During the session of 1917, as hon. gentlemen who acted on the Committee of Marine and Fisheries will remember, and at the time when Sir Douglas Hazen was Minister of Marine and Fisheries, this matter came before the committee and we were very much surprised, if not astounded, to learn that when we were buying what we supposed to be a pound of lobster we were getting not more than from ten to thirteen ounces instead of sixteen ounces as everybody naturally supposed. The explanation made at that time by those who were interested in the lobster packing business was that it had got to be a sort of unwritten law amongst themselves that they would not put sixteen ounces in a pound can but they would put whatever the packer saw fit. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries of that day, realizing the importance of this matter, took a very great interest in it and, coming as he did from the Maritime Provinces, he had a very general knowledge of the situation. He and his staff at that time realized the importance of putting on the statute books a legal definition of what should be known as a pound, three-quarter pound, half pound and quarter pound can of lobster, so that the buyer might really get the amount specified in the can. That was only reasonable and proper. What happened? That committee sat day after day during a large portion of the session. Finally they agreed upon the matter and recommended that what was known as a pound

can should contain fourteen ounces, a three-quarter pound can ten and a fraction ounces, and so forth. When the committee recommended this the lobster packers pointed out that owing to the fact that it was getting along in the spring and they were preparing for lobster fishing, they having to prepare their cans a year ahead, they were going to have a lot of those cans upon their hands which would be a waste and a loss to them. To meet their views the committee placed a rider in the Act saying that the Act should not come into force until December 15, 1918. Therefore, this Act has never come into force at all because there has been no lobster packing in the Maritime Provinces since that date. Then what happened? The lobster packers meet and say: We are not going to have this put in force at all; it will not affect us now, and we will apply to Parliament and have it changed and put back to where it was prior to the introduction of this legislation in 1917. This Parliament after due and careful consideration legislated upon this subject, placed before the public what a can of lobster should contain and delayed the operation of the Act until the 15th day of December, 1918.

And now, only three months after that law was to go into effect, legislation is proposed to do away with it altogether. My hon. friend from Northumberland (Mr. Loggie) tells the Acting Minister of the Naval Service, this afternoon, that he attended that convention in Halifax, and, as a practical lobster packer, stated that he was not in favour of reducing the weight of the dry lobster meat in these cans; some argued that the cans they were using for the purpose were not large enough to contain sufficient liquid to preserve the lobster properly while it was in transit and before it was sold to the consumer. The hon. gentleman, from practical experience, must know that the can is sufficiently large, because he advocated this afternoon that what is commonly termed the pound can should contain fourteen ounces of dry lobster meat. I am sure there is not a man in this House who has a better understanding of the conditions of the lobster packing industry than my hon. friend from Northumberland, and yet he says he advocated, at the convention of lobster packers referred to, that the weight of the can should remain as specified in the legislation of 1917. Having come to the conclusion, after considerable investigation and inquiry, that the Act placed upon the statute book at that time was a proper one, why the necessity for this change? That