

engineer is being sought to clear stream obstructions. I would point out to the minister that British Columbia definitely now has an unemployment problem, and I sincerely hope that his programme of expansion of our fishery service will result in the employment of a large number of war veterans, who I understand are being trained in this work. I hope that that programme will be implemented as soon as possible.

Mr. BLACK (Cumberland): This is one of the most important departments of government so far as the people of Nova Scotia and the maritime provinces are concerned. Fish is one of our great natural resources and deserves more attention than it has had in previous years. The Duncan commission recommended that fisheries be set up as a separate department, with a special minister placed in charge. I was a member of the provincial government that made this representation to the Duncan commission. We have had some capable ministers in charge of the Department of Fisheries who have made considerable progress. Unfortunately these ministers, I think without exception, have not been practical fishermen, but distinguished members of the legal profession. Many people interested in the fishing industry would have preferred that someone with practical experience and knowledge of the fishing industry be placed in charge of this department. I believe that the present minister has done fairly well in the time that he has been there, considering that he has had very little, if any, practical experience. He has been supported by capable officials in his department—I refer especially to the deputy minister and assistant deputy minister.

The great problem in Nova Scotia has been markets and prices. Our fishermen in former years have had to work at starvation wages over long periods of time. In recent years prices have been more satisfactory, but the fishermen could never understand why there should be such a tremendous spread between the price they were able to get, as low as fifty cents a hundred pounds, and what the consumer had to pay. I hope that the legislation we put through at a previous session providing for floor prices will rectify this.

There is also the matter of the quality and the marketing of the fish. It has been recommended that a special aeroplane service be established in order to market the fish regularly and in the best possible condition. I do not know whether the minister is prepared to make a statement in that regard. I am referring particularly to fish caught in the outlying portions of Nova Scotia, fish caught

on the coasts and marketed inland at a considerable distance from where it is caught. The marketing of the fish in first-class condition depends upon better facilities for transport, and in this connection it is desirable that an aeroplane service be established.

I would ask the minister what is his attitude and that of his department with respect to the large merger recently made in Nova Scotia in the fishing industry. I have no reflections to make on those who are at the head of this big organization. If they are going to direct their attention to assisting the actual fishermen in the marketing of their product, I believe there is no one more capable of doing that than those at the head of that great merger. On the other hand it is giving the fishermen of Nova Scotia a great deal of concern as to whether the merger has been set up with the approval and under the control of the department and has for its object an improvement in the lot of the fishermen, and whether it will be able to achieve that purpose and guarantee them a satisfactory price and a steady market.

There is a good deal more that I should like to say in connection with the work of this department, but I know the committee is anxious to make progress and I shall not delay it.

Mr. MOORE: I have listened with a great deal of interest to the discussion that has taken place this afternoon on fishing. All the speakers have been brief and to the point and the discussion has been really worth while. I happen to come from Manitoba, where the fishing industry is of considerable importance. The statement was made this afternoon that the agriculturists of this country get a great deal of benefit from the federal department of agriculture because of the activities of members of parliament on behalf of agriculture. That may be true, but we must look forward to a much greater expenditure still on agriculture if it is to continue to be the industry it is supposed to be. Saskatchewan, for instance, will require an expenditure of \$200,000,000 for a major irrigation project. This is something of extreme importance. I do not think we are asking too much when we ask this. We must remember that prior to the outbreak of the present war over 400 million dollars was spent on Singapore, and the guns of the naval base could not be turned around to fire inland. The enemy came up from behind and the garrison simply had to surrender.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.