

Canada have been cleaned up—I do not mention the United States as they are such a small factor that they can be overlooked—so that to-day practically all markets are in excellent shape with prices 25 per cent above those ruling a year ago.

It must be admitted that the demoralization of the fish trade during the past three years has had a most serious affect in the Maritime provinces, as owing to the price obtainable by the fisherman it did not provide him with sufficient to pay his bills and a large number of fishermen migrated to the United States. In the province of Quebec, where we are largely interested, the fishermen sought other occupations in Canada. Twenty-five per cent advance in price means that this year every available boat on the Gaspé coast will be put into operation. It is estimated that the number of men fishing will be again back to normal. The improved position also means that the Lunenburg fleet, instead of being only 40 to 50 vessels as predicted last autumn, will probably be between 60 and 70 vessels.

There is one unfortunate situation in regard to fishing operations which particularly pertains to the province of Nova Scotia, in that while the price of dry fish has materially advanced, the price of pickle cured codfish as produced for the boneless fish trade in the United States has gone down in value about 50 per cent per 100 pounds. This class of fish has in recent years been sold at high prices in the United States; in fact at prices that gave returns at least one-third more than if the fish had been dried. Owing to Gloucester and other operators in boneless fish having written Nova Scotia producers that they will have to lower their price this year, many Nova Scotia fishermen have become discouraged and it looks very much as if there would be a further exodus to the United States. We have recently had advice from Cape Island, which was the centre of the production of pickle cured codfish, that very few boats will be fishing this year. The cause of the decrease in the value of this cure of fish is apparently due to the American public turning away from the use of salt codfish as a regular food article. We are in a position to size up the situation as we have been carrying on large operations in Portland, Maine, during the past six years, operating chiefly in boneless fish. Our output last year was very disappointing—only a little over half of our expectations. On a recent visit to Gloucester the head of the Gorton-Pew Company and other heads of Gloucester houses, informed me that their experience had been the same. The result is heavy over-supplies of this quality of fish at the present time. While this business seriously affects the south shore of Nova Scotia where 75 per cent of the fish caught during the past few years has been pickle cured for the boneless fish trade, the interests involved are not nearly so important as those concerned in the dry fish export trade, so that on the whole it would appear to me that conditions generally pertaining to the fish trade are in much better shape than at any time during the last four years. During the past year the great difficulty was not in marketing dry fish with a profit, but the fact that supplies in Canada and Newfoundland were very short. This owing to decrease in the number of men fishing, estimated at 25 per cent in Newfoundland and 30 per cent to 40 per cent in the Maritime provinces and the Gaspé peninsula.

We can assure you that the dry fish exporting houses are doing their utmost to encourage the fishermen and small dealers throughout eastern Canada to as much as possible get back to ordinary fishing operations, which have always meant so much for the prosperity of the Atlantic coast. There is no doubt whatever that the production of both dry codfish and pickle cured herring, mackerel and alewives has seriously declined during the last twenty-five

years. We would say to the extent of about 25 per cent as regards dry fish and 50 per cent as regards pickled fish. We can pretty well judge of this by our own operations. Whereas in the five years previous to 1914 we handled an average of 200,000 quintals of dry fish per year, our average for the last three years has only been 150,000 quintals. While competition from the United States is negligible, there is no doubt whatever that our export fish trade is up against very severe competition from European countries, particularly Norway and Iceland. It would appear that production costs are less than with us. In regard, however, to at least part of the Canadian production, we have the advantage of producing a superior article which out-sells the Norwegian cure in Brazil and Mediterranean ports.

A movement has recently been made to start a campaign of education in connection with the various branches of the fisheries, such as the best methods of handling fresh fish, smoking fish, canning of various fish products and the introduction of the very best possible methods among the fishermen in the various fishing districts. This educational campaign is to be carried on under the direction of the Biological Board of Canada. Steps are now in progress to establish a station at Halifax, which, although it is being directed by the Biological Board, will be distinctly along educational lines. In addition to the proposals as set forth above, steps will be taken to adequately investigate the movements of fish and the putting before our fishermen the results obtained, as well as up-to-date information of the very best methods that are being used in European countries.

Mr. Speaker, we have every reason to believe that conditions will improve and that as a result our fishermen will return from the United States, and we hope ultimately to have such a development of the industry as will equal if not exceed its past greatness.

There is just one other matter that I want to place before the House. I refer to the efforts of Sir Henry Thornton in behalf of the port of Halifax. The results obtained by him are due to three causes. The steamship business at Halifax has greatly increased. That has been due, first, to the fact that the 10 per cent reduction in the differential applying only through Canadian ports has brought freight from the Old Country and from foreign countries to Halifax for transportation throughout Canada; second, the differential having been removed, putting Halifax on the same basis as St. John and all other Atlantic ports, is bringing a greater tonnage of freight to Halifax; and, third, Sir Henry Thornton on taking over the presidency of the Canadian National Railway system saw to it at once that his traffic officers went to the Old Land and there went amongst those who intended to come out and settle in our country, saw that they were transported across the ocean by steamship lines that were working in conjunction with the Canadian National Railways, namely, the Cunard and White Star, and that that traffic which went to American ports in other years was brought into Halifax. During the year