

Now there is positively no question that the excellence of our pack was impaired and that it deteriorated as a result of this practice. The hon. gentleman would have the house believe that we are going to deprive the fishermen of a free market. In his closing remarks he said that these fishermen were having their livelihood imperilled by this order in council. What are the facts? I say to the hon. gentleman, or perhaps I should say it to the house as it is quite useless to address my hon. friend: All questions have two sides. Of that there is no doubt. This government is not disinclined to listen to any reasonably honest presentation of the other side of any of its actions or the questioning of any of its actions. However, I am disinclined to attach much importance to much that the hon. gentleman has said.

Mr. HANSON (Skeena): I think he knows more about fish than any hon. member on this side of the house.

Mr. STEVENS: On that side of the house, that is possible.

An hon. MEMBER: Any side.

Mr. STEVENS: As I say, there are two sides to all questions. I am quite willing and quite prepared to admit that there are two sides to this question. We are not adverse to this matter being called into question and to having it examined carefully, but we should look at some of the facts before we jump to conclusions.

The Pacific coast of British Columbia is divided into three large fishing districts, and each fishing district contains from six to a dozen subdistricts for inspection purposes. The districts are very large and each contain a large number of canneries. The hon. gentleman sought to leave the impression with the house that there was but one cannery to a district. The hon. member shakes his head, but he will remember that I interjected while he was speaking to point out that that was not the case. Perhaps I should have secured a map of these districts, but I think I am safe in saying that there are from ten to fifteen canneries in each district, and even more in some districts. I will admit that last year they were not all operating, but a great many were. The fishermen in a district are at liberty to sell their fish to any cannery in that district. The hon. gentleman shakes his head, but I say positively that that is the case. I shall repeat it so that there may be no doubt about what I am saying. The fishermen in any one of these districts are at perfect liberty to sell their fish to any cannery within that district.

Mr. NEILL: Subject to this twenty-four hour rule.

Mr. STEVENS: Certainly, but he is within twenty-four hours of any point in that district. Due to weather conditions it might be possible that a fisherman out on the west coast of Vancouver island could not come around the lower or northern part of the island to some remote cannery on the inside of the channel within twenty-four hours, but there are a number of canneries on the west coast of Vancouver island quite convenient to the fishing grounds where the fish are naturally caught. The fish to which my hon. friend referred that are caught outside and are brought into the Fraser river are largely fish caught by seiners out in what might be called extraterritorial waters. The fishermen on the west coast of Vancouver island near where my hon. friend lives have a number of canneries in that vicinity to which they can sell their fish. There are no complaints made as to the facilities for selling fish in that district.

This order in council which has been beleaguered so vigorously this afternoon, which has been condemned by my hon. friend, is precisely in the terms of another order in council which has been on the statute books—if you like to use that term—for many years. The hon. member has been sitting in this house for seven or eight years while that other order in council has been in force and he has not said a word about it. That order in council proscribes the movement of fish from Queen Charlotte island to the mainland. The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Hanson) knows that.

An hon. MEMBER: Prescribes?

Mr. STEVENS: Proscribes the movement of fish from Queen Charlotte island to the mainland. This order in council was prompted by the previous order which has been in force for years. Did we hear the hon. gentleman spend an hour and a half in condemning the government which he was supporting at that time because of that order in council?

Mr. NEILL: That is not in my district.

Mr. STEVENS: The hon. gentleman says that that is not in his district, but is the whole Pacific coast in his district? For an hour and a half he has been talking about the whole Pacific coast. As far as the fishermen in his district are concerned they can sell their fish to forty or fifty different canneries contiguous to his district. The point to be brought to the attention of the house is that an order in council in precisely the same terms has been in force for years.