

us, I did come to the conclusion, which was shared by a majority of the commission, that the method of fishing by the Lunenburg schooners would be perfectly suitable. My hon. friend says this question was gone into thoroughly. I want to say this, that none of these commissions was set up to deal with the trawler question exclusively. These were commissions which dealt with a wide range of subjects; and when you are dealing with this question and—in the case of the price spreads commission—a hundred others, an extremely limited time is given for consideration of this particular problem. I have learned a good deal since then; I have gone into this question. As far as I can remember, this distinction between fresh and frozen fish was not dealt with before that commission at all. The matter was gone into in a sketchy way; and, as I see them, the facts are exactly as I have stated them to-day. There was the Maclean commission, in which there was a dissenting report. The report following the Cockfield Brown investigation was wholly in favour of trawlers. In the case of the Jones commission, one of the commissioners refused to express any opinion because he did not feel competent to do so. In the price spreads commission also there was a dissenting report. But here is the singular fact, that no one charged with responsibility, no one in the position of a minister and no one in the position of a government since 1910, when trawlers first came into use, has ever reached the situation where they thought they dared take that chance with the fresh fish business of eastern Canada.

Mr. KINLEY: Except in the Ralston order in council of 1929.

Mr. ILSLEY: That was a compromise, or something of the kind.

Mr. KINLEY: It was absolute prohibition.

Mr. ILSLEY: No, it was never put into force at all. No person charged with real responsibility has undertaken to abolish these trawlers. It may be that they should be abolished. The situation is in a narrow compass: It is up to this Minister of Fisheries to decide on that question of fact, and unfortunately he has to decide it every year. He has to decide on this question: Can another method of catching fish furnish an adequate supply of suitable fish? He gets evidence on both sides, and he has found himself impelled from year to year to come to the conclusion that it cannot do it.

Mr. DUNNING: Just as his predecessor did.

Mr. ILSLEY: Just as Mr. Rhodes did, just as Mr. Duranleau did and just as other ministers of fisheries have done. They have been doing that every year. Members from Nova Scotia, and notably one of the ablest of Nova Scotians, Mr. Ernst, who represented Queens-Lunenburg, and who was the predecessor of the hon. member who spoke this afternoon, said in a speech I heard in the house, that the question is not one of abolition, but one of regulation. He said, "While this may not be popular in my constituency. I feel that this company in Halifax cannot get a continuous or steady supply of fish unless they have trawlers." Therefore he said they should not be abolished but should be restricted. He and every other minister who held office in the Bennett government between 1931 and 1935, and ministers who have held office since 1935, have come to the same conclusion. There is a business situation there. There is a practical situation. There is no use in trying to make it into an issue between a big corporation and the fishermen. The question is: How are you going to maintain your business and see that you look after those fishermen in eastern Nova Scotia, and at the same time keep some hold on the people who are processing, who have plants and facilities for processing, and see that they buy those fish.

It is true that in some parts of Nova Scotia sentiment is strongly against trawlers. I have heard it said that there was no use in arguing against the sentiment, because people's minds were set. But, as a minister from Nova Scotia, whether it hurts me or helps me, I cannot help saying what I sincerely believe about this matter to which I have given a great deal of thought and study during the last two or three years. I have no fault to find with the manner in which the Minister of Fisheries has dealt with it and is now dealing with it. I hate the legislation, and I hate the order in council. I wish we did not have to have this barrage every year from both sides of the house, but we have to face our responsibilities.

As I have said, the minister has not yet given his decision this year, and I do not know what it will be. But the position lies right within a very narrow compass. There is no use in trying to convert it into a great social or humanitarian issue, because it is not anything of the kind. It is a question of what is the best thing to do for the fishermen of Nova Scotia.

Mr. STEVENS: Would the minister permit a question? I believe he has under his hand some statistics which might be helpful to me. Where was the frozen fish marketed?