

a great waste of public money having fishery commissions—I am not going to say it is an absolute waste of money and time—but suppose you send a commission to Winnipeg and examine 100 or 200 people; you have a compilation of a lot of evidence which, when printed is thrown into some corner where nobody ever sees it or wants to see it because it is so voluminous. The matter of the conduct of the fisheries of Lake Winnipeg is, after all, a matter of policy which should always be determined on some line of reasoning, and I think this Committee, with the assistance of the officers of the department, could do it very much better and more quickly than any commission could. Now, a commission was appointed to investigate the lobster business in Nova Scotia, and the report of that commission is now before us; I heard evidence given before that commission. I went to places where they were sitting, and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that what I heard in some of those places was absolutely useless because one man gives one view and another gives another view. The result was, I have not the slightest hesitation in the world, that the report of that Commission was the report of Prof. Prince. Now if the officers of the Department are doing their work, if they are students of their work, they, together with the representatives of the people in parliament, should know the local conditions and are on the whole better judges than even the people themselves, because the parliamentary representatives are continually hearing the views of everybody else and they gradually assimilate those views and reach a conclusion. Of course, I am not desirous of interrupting the present policy of the Department or its present decision to appoint Commissioners but I think that hereafter there should be as few of these commissions as possible. I think this Committee can do the work much more quickly and at less expense to the country than could any Commission you could name providing it is given the assistance of the officers of the Department and that they are sent upon the ground to study questions, coming back afterwards to the committee with their views.

Mr. BRADBURY.—The point which Mr. Maclean has raised is a good one. If the appointment of this commission has not gone too far I would be satisfied to see it done away with and the investigation carried on by this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN.—We cannot deal with that question here.

Mr. BRADBURY.—Why?

The CHAIRMAN.—Because it is too big a question and it has gone to the House.

Hon. Mr. BRODEUR.—What we want to do by means of this Commission is to get the views of the fishermen on the spot. They have sent us complaints and they want us to investigate them. How can a Committee such as this, sitting here for only three or four hours a week, conduct such an investigation and take the evidence of these men? It would be altogether impossible. We are going to send a Commission there to examine the persons making the complaints and obtain their views. Some of those views may not be of much value but others will undoubtedly be of great value.

Mr. BRADBURY.—Some of them undoubtedly will.

Hon. Mr. BRODEUR.—If we undertake to attach all such work to this Committee I do not think we will be able to properly discharge our duties in that regard. It may be that some things which formerly were inquired into by commissions may be undertaken by this committee, which possibly may suggest questions of policy, but in regard to a commission such as that just appointed the investigation must be undertaken on the ground amongst the people in the Northwest. Otherwise it means simply examining a few witnesses who may be brought here and those men perhaps not the best that could be chosen. At the same time I think that in some cases commissions could be dispensed with and the work efficiently performed by this Committee.

Mr. JAMESON.—I would like to have produced at the next meeting if possible, a memorandum showing the number of canning licenses in the respective counties. It would not be necessary to have the names of the persons holding the licenses but simply the number in each county.