

remarks for the consideration of the Minister and ask for an explanation.

Mr. MACDONALD (King's, P.E.I.) I would like to ask the Minister if this amount includes a sum for extending the hatchery for lobsters as well as other fish. I was going to say that that is the most important feature of the whole lobster fisheries just now, and I think it is a branch of business to which the Minister should give his attention. From correspondence I have had last year from Newfoundland on this question, I think, if my memory serves me right, that the lobster hatchery there met with wonderful success, and that something like 480,000,000 of young lobsters were put into the water that had been hatched by a very simple process. Now, if that is a fact, and if the hatchery that has been started in Pictou County this year has met with the success that I hear it has had, I think that contains the whole solution of the lobster business, and that if we can successfully hatch out lobsters in the way it is said they are doing in these hatcheries it will do away with any necessity of making stringent laws with respect to the protection of the fisheries further than shortening the season. The shortening of the season is ample and sufficient for the protection of the business. What I supposed the Minister had in view was the late season this year at which the fishery commenced and the serious storms that had occurred during the season, when he made the mistake of extending the season this year until 1st August. With respect to the fishing in our county, I can safely say that the fishermen as a whole were well pleased with the usual season they have been having of late years, and it would have been better had the season ended at the usual time. With respect to the size of the lobsters, I think that matter should be left very much to the fishermen themselves. All that is necessary, in order to preserve that valuable branch of the business, is to restrict the season to the time allowed for several years past. If that is done, the business will look after itself. In King's County those who prosecute the fishery have not been greedy about an extension of the season at any time, and they would always be perfectly satisfied and willing, if there was no law to restrict, to close at the period named, if not before, and in some cases they have closed before, but at all events they would be quite satisfied to close at the time set down by the department. I believe the fishery will be maintained and even improved by the short season, without imposing any further restrictions on the fishermen. That fact is to be seen established in the improvement of the fishery in our county, where the short season has been adhered to, and where the fishery is improving year after year. I hope the Minister will give his earnest attention to the lobster hatcheries, and if the process is as simple as I am given to understand it is, he will see it is introduced in every section, not only of Prince Edward Island, but of the lower provinces, where lobster fishing is carried on, and that the immense quantities of ova that are now destroyed and go into the boilers—for these lobsters will be taken as long as lobster factories are in existence—will be utilized. If the hatchery system can be carried out as regards lobsters we will be able to return to the sea more lobsters than are taken from it, and thus keep up the supply from a source that is now lost sight of.

I hope the Minister will give this subject his close attention, and establish lobster hatcheries wherever they are required.

Mr. TUPPER. This subject is a very important one to the Maritime Provinces, and it is very gratifying to the Department of Fisheries to find there is an entire change on the part of the lobster packers in reference to the regulations which have been enforced, in the report of the Lobster Commission to which the hon. gentleman has referred. The chief feature of the report was the radical change which was recommended in regard to the open season. At one time the lobster packer took lobsters both in spring and fall, the close season varying nearly every year in the middle or summer months. That was a condition of affairs that was confusing and, certainly, not as it should have been. I have, with a great deal of difficulty, endeavoured to enforce this close season, notwithstanding the opposition of packers in almost every district. It shows how impossible it is to please everybody, when this year the extension given has aroused considerable displeasure among the packers of Prince Edward Island, or a certain number of them. But I may say, in explanation, that a large number of packers communicated with me, protesting against this extension, after the season had been extended, and they "let the cat out of the bag," by saying, not merely that it was against the interest of the fishing to make the extension, but that great anxiety was felt as to its effect on the price of the catch, and they mentioned in their telegram to me that an extension would lower the price of the lobsters already caught. Whatever was their chief consideration, the question is still before us as to maintaining rigidly this close season, which, in Prince Edward Island, ends 15th July. I can tell the House that the extension proposed in the Island and a part of New Brunswick was made under certain misapprehension, and to that extent is a reflection perhaps on my department. It is better to state how that extension came about. There were very strong representations from Cape Breton Island made to the department, setting out that there had been exceptional storms and an enormous number of traps had been carried away, that fishing had been interrupted during a large portion of the season, that the lobsters were in splendid condition, and that a short extension of time would not this year be injurious to the lobster fishing. That was during the early portion of this session. I gave directions to ascertain from our own officers how far those representations were correct. There was not much opportunity for careful enquiry, for this reason: that the request from the different districts had been received towards the end of the regular season, and the decision of the department was required to be very quickly made, in order that there might be no interregnum or lapse between the regular season and the beginning of the next. The representations were verified as regards Cape Breton. My directions were that when the circumstances were similar, when the condition of the fish was good, when there had been a great loss of traps, accordingly a smaller catch proportionately, similar treatment should be accorded to the different districts, so that the department would not be in the position of doing for one district what it would not do for another. There was a misapprehension, and