

Fisheries Act

canned, but two weeks later they opened up the river for fishing. This question has been asked and never answered properly: If the fish were not fit to be canned on September 12 last why, after closing the river for two weeks, was it decided that the fish were all right, as was shown by the fact that the river was opened for fishing again? As a matter of fact when the river was reopened two weeks later the cannery men, naturally enough, were afraid to can the fish caught, with the result that the fishermen took them across the line and received more for their fish than they would have received if they had been accepted by the Canadian cannery men.

Then it was stated by the department that the fishermen were not injured by reason of the fact that seines were allowed in this area, and it was stated further that in 1934 the fishermen received more money than they had received in the previous year. They overlooked the fact that there were actually more fishermen in that area than the number given out by the department. The department simply took number of licences issued in that area, divided them by the sum total of the price received and said, "There you are; each individual received so much. We have taken the number of licences and divided that into the total amount, and therefore the fishermen got more." I ask: Is that evidence? I say it is not evidence and we could prove the contrary; had the fishermen been given an opportunity to appear before the committee it could have been amply proven that hundreds of fishermen came from other areas into that area. The fact has been overlooked, also, that while it is true some individual fishermen obtained larger catches, they might have obtained such catches and more because some individual boats were in operation twenty-four hours of the day.

In 1922 a commission was sent out to British Columbia to investigate the fishing industry, and the report adopted by this house stated that no seines should be allowed where gill nets could operate. Well, gill nets have been operating in that area for fifty years. It is strange that from 1922 nothing was done until 1933, at which time it was suddenly opened up. Why? That was done because other areas had been fished out and the cannery men were demanding more places for their boats; they have a certain amount of money invested in those boats. It is their idea to keep their boats operating for as long a period as possible and be in a position to move them from one district to another.

I state in all seriousness my belief that the fishing industry as a whole has suffered greatly

[Mr Reid.]

because we have had no minister of fisheries. I make that observation advisedly and in all kindness to the present acting minister. The present arrangement does not give the present acting minister or any person who may hold that office the proper incentive to go ahead and to look into all aspects of the field with a view to conducting the Department of Fisheries as it should be conducted. I claim that no matter how efficient may be the department in this city of Ottawa, the men on the Pacific coast and the fishermen engaged in the trade know more about the fishing industry than do the officials in the department. With the statement that we should have had a minister of fisheries I would couple the observation that the fishing industry is one of the most important. In 1929 the total trade in the fishing industry was valued at \$53,000,000. In the fishing operations 65,391 men were employed and on shore 13,927 found employment, making a total of 79,318 persons. An industry showing that volume of trade and this large number of persons engaged in it might well have had a minister of fisheries who could have devoted the greater part of his time to the industry.

This is an instance of vested interests operating against the individual fishermen. When the price spreads commission was investigating conditions in the Atlantic coast fisheries I should like to have seen them investigate and take evidence from the Pacific coast. Had they done so I believe conditions revealed on the Pacific coast would have been far worse than those on the Atlantic seaboard. I believe the fishing industry on the Pacific coast is being mainly controlled by certain large interests in the east. It is a well known fact, I believe, that the Gundy interests control some fishing companies out there.

Then we hear talk about prices. It is very strange that although United States cannery men pay far more for their fish they can sell it much cheaper to the United States consumer than does the Canadian cannery man to the Canadian consumer. I hold in my hands two tins of salmon of the same variety, one a Canadian can and the other an American. I bought these cans of salmon because I thought it worth while to bring the evidence with me; there is nothing like producing the goods. Although the United States fishermen receive more money than the Canadian fishermen for the same variety of fish, the American consumer can buy a one pound tin of fish far cheaper than can the Canadian consumer. I say the vested interests in Canada are soaking it to the Canadian consumer. What do we find so far as No. 1 sockeye is concerned? In Canada the consumer is charged 35 cents