

Supply—Fisheries

One can well imagine the loss to the fishermen when over 25 per cent of their catch fetches a reduced price or no price at all.

I point this out as a problem of local concern but none the less important. What is the reason? Are the lobsters taken from the Newfoundland area less durable than the lobsters taken from any other areas? Are the methods of holding awaiting shipment such as to be detrimental to the lobsters? Are the actual transportation conditions too rigid for the lobster to survive the ocean trip? These are questions which need expert investigation to determine the best corrective methods in order to give the fishermen the greatest possible return for their labour.

I mention these as local problems, Mr. Chairman, because they are problems that require practical solutions based on information already acquired or to be acquired by scientific research.

I should now like to make a few comments of a more general nature. The hon. member for Charlotte referred to a statement made by the premier of Newfoundland, implying that the fisheries of the province of Newfoundland were declining. No such statement is true, of course. When he made his statement the premier was referring to two things, first to the number of fishermen employed in the industry in Newfoundland; and second, to the importance of the industry when compared with some other industries. Now obviously, or I think it is obvious, in any composite whole one component may increase in absolute value and yet decrease in relation to its percentage of the whole. To me it is just a simple application of Engel's law. I would say to my hon. friend that while it may be true that the number of fishermen engaged in the fishing industry in Newfoundland may be fewer than they were in years gone by, the actual value of the fisheries is not decreasing. I hold in my hand the Atlantic provinces statistical review of April, 1961. I note that the preliminary figures for the year 1960, as compared with the figures for 1953, of total landed values show an increase of 33 per cent. The landed value of all sea fish in Newfoundland in 1953 amounted to slightly over \$12 million. The preliminary figures for 1960 show \$16 million, or an increase of roughly 33 per cent. This in fact is slightly higher than the increase for the Atlantic provinces as a whole.

The total landed value for the four Atlantic provinces in 1953 was \$43 million. The preliminary figures for 1960 are \$56 million, or an increase of 30 per cent. Our problem in Newfoundland, Mr. Chairman, is that the fishing industry is not maintaining its place in an expanding economy. What we need are more research, more investment, better quality products and larger markets. One of

the great difficulties of the fishing industry in Newfoundland is that in a large sector of its activities it is almost impossible for the fisherman to make a living wage when he is employed in that industry alone. There are many reasons for this, included among which are low prices for the product, too low a production particularly of those types of fish which fetch the highest prices, and the inability of fishermen to work for long periods of the year.

As far as low prices for the product are concerned, the solution does not rest entirely in our own hands. Markets will determine the prices to be paid on factors over which we have no control. Prices paid may be relatively high in relation to the general economy of the area in which the market exists, but relatively low in relation to the general economy of the area in which the commodity is produced. In any industry in Canada I think we shall find it increasingly difficult to maintain Canadian wages on European prices, but we do have in our own hands the possibility of improving the situation to some degree. The fact of producing specific articles of the highest quality for specific markets may be one way of doing this. An example is light salted cod. It is possible to attain further improvement in the position by endeavouring to produce more of those fishery products which bring higher prices. It was for this reason that earlier in my remarks I referred to the possibility of producing and marketing a larger amount of halibut and attempting to increase the percentage of first class lobsters arriving at the marketing points.

The average price of all sea fish landings in the year 1960 was lower in Newfoundland than in any other of the Atlantic provinces. For example, in 1960 Prince Edward Island landed 3.4 per cent of the total landed weight of the four Atlantic provinces. Prince Edward Island had 8.2 per cent of the total landed revenue at an average value per pound of 10.9 cents. For the same year the percentage of the total landed weight of the four provinces for Nova Scotia was 34.4, and the percentage of the landed value was 46.5, at an average value per pound of 6.1 cents. New Brunswick, in the same year, produced 18.1 per cent of the total landed weight and had 16.4 per cent of the landed value at an average of 4.1 cents per pound. On the other hand, Newfoundland produced 44 per cent of the total landed weight and received only 28.9 per cent of the total landed value, at an average value of 3.0 cents per pound.

It is my contention that these figures support the view that we should strive to produce a higher quality commodity and, at the same time, attempt to increase the production of