

was still a substantial demand for salt fish, the main emphasis was placed on fresh frozen fish and fresh frozen filets.

The fishing industry in the United Kingdom has now been substantially rehabilitated, as has the industry in France and other European countries, with the result that these markets are no longer available to us. Furthermore, under the impetus of demands arising from the war, the fishing industries in Newfoundland and Iceland developed to the point where they are serious competitors for the United States market.

The United States on its own behalf has expanded its fishing industry by putting into operation many more draggers in the last few months. That nation is therefore in a better position to supply its own needs than it was even a short time ago, although it is not likely that it will be able to meet demands for its own internal consumption, even now.

We hope that under new trade and tariff agreements the United States will still permit a generous quota of foreign fish to enter that country; but we do not lose sight of the fact that there will be keen competition to determine which nation will provide the bulk of the quota, and low costs will decide the ultimate winner.

In recent months there has been a decided indication that the price of fish might not hold. That is one of the most serious things we have to contend with at the present time. Recently the price of cod slipped off one cent and the industry is trying desperately to hold the price at the present level. There are indications that with the large inventories there are on hand, and with the possibility of over-production at the present time, the industry may be under the greatest strain to hold the price at the present level. Therefore we are asking the government at this time to provide some measure of support in the event that the price slips off still more. It is fully realized that, even though some assistance from the government may be forthcoming, it can be only temporary in nature and that in the long run the industry must either stand on its own feet or fall.

There are two solutions to this problem. We must meet competition in order to obtain a fair share of the United States markets and we must take drastic steps to develop our own home market. Even in our own home market we shall be met with competition. We are fully aware that in such centres as Montreal, Toronto and other central Canadian cities those who are able to produce fish for the

[Mr. Winters.]

least cost will get the market. We feel that cost will be a factor even in connection with our own Canadian market.

In attempting to meet foreign competition we must remember that many countries which produce fish have a standard of living considerably lower than ours. Their fishermen are paid much less for their fish than are ours. Our standards are relatively high and it is quite understandable that every effort must be made to maintain them. But we must face realities. In order to meet competition, and meet it we must if the industry is to survive, there must be a reduction in our operating costs. That is not easy in view of the fact that there have been escalating increases in the cost of the instruments of production, as the hon. member for Nanaimo has so well said. We hope that production costs can be decreased without further lowering the price of fish to our fishermen. All other means of reducing costs must first be fully explored to the complete satisfaction of the fishermen. It is in this field that the fisheries research board may be able to play an important and determining part in finding ways and means of decreasing the cost of production.

The other solution to the problem of protecting our fishing industry is to develop our home market by increasing consumption. I should like to refer to the April bulletin of the Fisheries Council of Canada, as did the hon. member for Nanaimo, and quote the following:

Arguments that the war years brought an unprecedented demand for food and that the knocking out of competitive fishing countries gave Canada artificial opportunities, weaken substantially in the face of statistics which show that the 1945 per capita consumption of fish was 8.4 pounds as against 139.7 pounds of meat. The ratio is absurd, yet if the per capita consumption of Canadian fish products were increased from only three to five pounds—

Presumably they mean by only three to five pounds.

—it would overstrain the industry's productive capacity if pre-war export markets were maintained but the results would soon be quickly apparent and, assuming that prices were held at a reasonably profitable level, such increased demands for fish products would result in a continuing prosperity and steady employment for the industry.

I submit that the situation in Canada with respect to the consumption of fish is absurd when we consider the consumption of meat, eggs and poultry, if the figures quoted by the hon. member for Nanaimo are correct, and I have every reason to believe that they are except that his figures for the consumption of eggs seemed rather high; the low usage of fish is deplorable by comparison. The per capita consumption of fish in Canada is only