

The 'Kestrel's' orders have been to cruise in Hecate straits, and although the depredations of the poaching vessels on the west coast of Vancouver island was known to her officers they were unable to proceed there, because in the first place their orders were explicit to remain in the north despite the fact that the poachers had changed their sphere of operations, and in the second place, the 'Kestrel' is not considered a suitable vessel for winter weather off the west coast of Vancouver island.

It cannot exactly be news to my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries to hear that the poachers were not to be expected in Hecate straits, but notwithstanding that fact, he ordered his cruiser to stay there and catch the poachers in a place where no poachers would go. I say that because I find in the report of the fisheries protection service of this year at page 353 that it is stated:

During the present season halibut has been extremely scarce in Hecate straits, and consequently the competition between fishermen very keen.

The fact of the matter is, that the Hecate straits fishing grounds have been seriously depleted by the depredations of the American fishermen. In the report of the department for the year 1908, I think, the minister, or his officers, states that halibut to the extent of 1,500,000 lbs, the value of which I have forgotten, was illegally taken from the banks of Hecate straits by American fishermen. That thing has been going on for a long time with the result that to-day the size of the halibut in Hecate straits has decreased to such an extent that it is no longer a desirable fishing ground, and fishermen have transferred their operations to the new banks which have been discovered on the west coast of Vancouver island. This matter is not new. We have, this year, Mr. John J. Williams, Inspector of Fisheries, complaining that the 'Falcon' which was going to be kept on the ground, was inadequate for the purpose. We have had this matter taken up in this House at various times and we had a most admirable speech made by Mr. Sloan, then member for Comox-Atlin, in which he went fully into this matter. We also had a speech from the Minister of Marine and Fisheries himself, on the subject, which will be found in 'Hansard' of 1906-7, page 1777. He states there:—

I have found that there is a great deal of poaching done, especially on the western coast of Vancouver and within the three mile limit. If, however, we have not the right to go outside the three mile limit in Hecate strait and Dixon entrance, I think we should adopt the policy of protecting our Canadian fisheries. We are very glad to see the American fishermen taking so much interest in our fisheries, but at the same time it is the duty of the government to protect those fisheries

Mr. BARNARD.

and keep them for our Canadian citizens. As they belong to us, they should be exploited by us; and if American fishermen go there they should at least—as has been done in the case of a New Washington company—give us as much benefit as possible. But we must do on the Pacific coast what I have said should be done with regard to the Atlantic coast. I am free to admit, however, that there seems to be more business activity shown by Canadians on the British Columbia coast. Our financial institutions have been investing large sums there, which is a condition of affairs I am glad to see. For my part, I am ready to take all the necessary steps to protect our fisheries along that coast. I have asked my colleagues to put at the disposal of my department another boat, a cruiser, which should be devoted almost exclusively to the protection of our fisheries. A sum is in the estimates for that purpose on which the House will be asked to vote; but I am sure, from the tenor of this discussion, that all the hon. members will be glad to co-operate with the government in that respect and give us the means of protecting our fisheries in the west, as we are doing in the east.

That was in 1906. In 1907, just before the general elections, the same vote was put in the estimates, but there is no cruiser yet. In 1909, shortly after the general election, I was informed by the minister that plans had been prepared for a cruiser, and I think he said that tenders had been called for. We have not got that cruiser yet, and apparently we are no nearer to having her than we were before. The hon. gentleman may say that the 'Rainbow' is adapted for this purpose, and I understand that there was some kind of an arrangement that in addition to being used as a training ship the 'Rainbow' was to be engaged in this service. However, the facts appear to be that these fishing boats lie so close inshore that the 'Rainbow,' with her heavy draught, would be useless for the service. The most suitable craft is a speedy gasoline boat of 20 or 25 knots, because these American fishing boats are all equipped with high power gasoline engines, and they can get out of the way of a steamer whose smoke they can see a great distance off. The fisheries of British Columbia to-day lead in productiveness the fisheries of the rest of the Dominion, and it is only in British Columbia that the revenues received by the Dominion from the fisheries far exceeds the expenditure. Prof. Prince, in his report, states that the British Columbia fisheries are probably the finest in the world, and it is the undoubted right of the people of that province to demand from this government that these fisheries shall be protected from depletion by the depredations which are now going on. I ask that the government shall provide, in the estimates this year, an appropriation for one or two gasoline boats to be used in this protective service.