

Statement on Salt Fish Marketing

too far. Certainly I would think that any comment that went beyond the length of the statement itself would be disproportionate and out of order. I feel the comment should be strictly relevant to the statement, and with that in mind I trust the hon. member will proceed to finish his statement.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can only say that I regret that the hon. member for Kootenay West regards this as not the kind of question that deserves comprehensive consideration.

Mr. Argue: That is an unfair statement.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Having dealt with the comparative situation, I want to conclude what I have to say by reminding the minister of his stand in connection with the document which he gave to the country yesterday, and which shows that 537,000 are out of work, 1,000 less—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Here is a very important statement which the minister has not emphasized. Employment in the Atlantic region reached a low level during February, largely as a result of shutdowns in the Nova Scotia coal mines. Some 14,000 fewer people were working in February than in the previous month. This is the kind of statement, together with what I have already said, that justifies the government not only in doing what they have announced today but in taking much more formidable and comprehensive steps than this program for coping with unemployment.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, we in the C.C.F. are disappointed in that when the minister announced the extension of the winter work program he extended it for only another month. This would have been acceptable had the minister coupled with that statement some assurance that the unemployment problem in Canada during the summer would be solved.

The announcement by the government means that all they have been able to accomplish, with the co-operation of the provinces and municipalities, has been to put to work on site a number of persons equal to about 6 per cent of the number of persons unemployed in this country. This shows that the government, in real fact, has thrown up its hands and is prepared to live with widespread unemployment. We feel that the statement that has been made this afternoon, welcome as it is, is but a gesture compared with what the government should be doing to cope with this major problem.

[Mr. Speaker.]

TRADE**SALT FISH—STATEMENT BY MINISTER ON MARKETING**

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, on August 1, 1958 I announced the government's decision that the exclusive right to export processed salted fish from Newfoundland, held by the Newfoundland Associated Fish Exporters Limited, would not be extended beyond July 31, 1959.

By the act of union between Canada and Newfoundland, the exclusive licence to export salted fish, which had been granted to the Newfoundland Associated Fish Exporters Limited by the commission of government, was continued for a period of five years in order to allow the orderly development of alternative marketing arrangements during this period of transition.

At the expiration of the licence arrangement with NAFEL in 1954 it was again agreed to continue the exclusive licence for a further period of three years, with the qualification that interprovincial trade in salt bulk was freed from this restriction. Subsequently two extensions of one marketing year each were granted, the final one at the time of my statement on August 1 last. Thus the salt fish industry of Newfoundland has had a ten-year period in which to adopt marketing methods in conformity with the practice of this trade in other Atlantic provinces and Quebec.

Serious consideration was given to alternative methods of marketing salt fish in Newfoundland. An interdepartmental committee made an extensive and exhaustive survey of the situation. Exporters, processors, fishermen and government officials in the Atlantic provinces and the province of Quebec were interviewed and given an opportunity to present their views.

After full consideration of all aspects of the trade, it was not found possible nor deemed in the best interests of the salt fish industry to adopt alternative methods of controlled marketing in the province of Newfoundland. Accordingly the export marketing of Atlantic coast salted fish after the 31st July, 1959, will be carried out on the basis of free competition.

The government will continue its present practice of supervising the inspection of Atlantic coast salted fish by the Department of Fisheries and will extend to exporters trade promotion assistance through the Department of Trade and Commerce in Canada and our trade commissioner service abroad.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonaville-Twillington): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his courtesy in giving this statement to the house so that it will be known