

censes are to-day granted to actual white fishermen, but, they do not control those licenses. They are controlled by corporations, but, while I believe that vested interests should be protected, I also believe that the white fisherman, the fisherman who pulls an oar, should have the right to catch and sell fish to the canners or in the market which will give him the best value for it. He does not have that right to-day, especially in the waters of the Pacific coast. I should like to go on and discuss many other items in connection with this question, but I know that my associates who have lived in the province for many years and who are more familiar with it than I am, will have something to say with regard to it and therefore I do not propose to say very much more on the subject. I only trust that the minister will give every consideration to the remarks which I have addressed to the House this afternoon on this very important question.

Mr. GEORGE H. BARNARD (Victoria). Mr. Speaker, as this is a question in which I have taken an active interest, I would not like to have a vote taken upon the resolution without saying a word or two in corroboration of what has been stated by my hon. friend from Comox-Atlin (Mr. Clements).

He has covered all the ground so far as the question of poaching is concerned so fully that there is very little that I can add. That poaching exists and has existed for a number of years, and that it has existed unchecked can hardly be denied. It has become so open, that it is a common thing to take up a daily newspaper, published in the city of Seattle in the state of Washington, and to find there items reporting the catches taken by American vessels along the coast of British Columbia, and in particular on the coast of Vancouver island. It is also an ordinary thing to read in the American newspapers that certain vessels are being constructed for the express purpose of going into this business. It has become also common to read the reports of the officials of the Marine and Fisheries Department saying that they are unquestionably unable, with the means at their command, to cope with this abuse. It is common to find the passenger steamers engaged in the coasting trade along the shores of British Columbia coming into port and reporting that they had seen here and there in the different ports along the coast numbers of American vessels using Canadian harbours. It was stated on one occasion, I remember, by the captain of one of these coasting vessels, that the lights of the American fishing schooners in one of the ports of Vancouver island seemed like the lights in the streets of a city. In addition to this, the poachers have become so bold that last year they actually at the

Mr. CLEMENTS.

point of the rifle drove the men off the Canadian salmon traps and stole the fish. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is not a nice sort of thing for Canadians to contemplate. Of course, altogether apart from the wasteful methods of these poachers, it puts the people of the province of British Columbia and the people of the whole Dominion in a humiliating position to think that they have a valuable asset in the fisheries of that coast which they are unable to protect. I may say, apropos of the wasteful methods of these poachers that it is a fact that in numbers of cases the halibut beds are being rapidly depleted and that the average size of the fish has dropped from about one hundred pounds to twenty pounds. Now so far as I can ascertain there have been no efforts on the part of the government of Canada to protect the Pacific coast fisheries. The steamer 'Kestrel' which has now been scrapped was until last summer the vessel upon which the department directly relied for the prevention of this poaching. Well, Mr. Speaker, you might as well try to catch a canary bird by putting salt on its tail as to try to catch one of these gasoline poachers with the 'Kestrel.' During the past six or seven years there have been I think, only three or four of these vessels caught, notwithstanding the fact that poaching has become a regular line of trade, in the neighbourhood of the city of Seattle, and the ports of Puget Sound, in British Columbia waters. About two years ago a vessel called the 'Levi Woodbury,' was seized and condemned, and I am advised on pretty good authority that she was afterwards released by the late government on payment of a fine of \$50, because the vessel was reported to be owned by a friend of the then administration. In addition to the 'Kestrel' there are one or two small boats engaged for the ostensible purpose of preventing poaching, and there have been from time to time a couple of whaling boats chartered in addition to a boat called the 'William Joliffe,' but all of these are absolutely unfit for the purpose they are intended for. Since 1907, the year it may be remembered before the general election, there has been an appropriation annually in the estimates for the building of a fishery protection cruiser, but no fishery protection cruiser has ever materialized. The late administration seemed to be somewhat of the opinion that that item in the estimates was going to prevent our American friends from taking the fish, but curiously enough it has not had that effect. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to this House that these fisheries are worth protecting. Professor Prince has made a report on the Pacific coast fisheries, in which he says they are probably the finest fisheries belonging to any one country anywhere in the world. He also says that they