

When it comes to a question of formulating a policy for the fisheries, in all fairness we must consider these things. It is not fair to reject the claims of our fishermen. It is not their fault, that conditions are as they are. It is not fair that they should be told that they can go away and leave their houses to rot, that they can board up their homes and leave their lands to go to ruin, while you take care of our fish curers and our fish corporations.

We claim that that is not right, and we will not be satisfied with any policy which sacrifices the interest of thousands of our people to the interests of a few.

Permit me to say generally that our people are bitterly disappointed with this bill which is to be presented to parliament; they hope it will not go through as it is. I do not know that I have anything more to say on the question.

*By Mr. MacLean:*

Q. What about the destruction of fish by the trawlers?—A. The fishermen do not agree at all with that. They declare that they have found spawn floating. I will take their word for that. The fishermen themselves who have fished on trawlers say that they have pulled up a lot of spawn with the trawl, and that there must be some on the bottom also. Let us leave that side of it. Grant for the sake of argument that fish spawn has been destroyed, it cannot be denied that when you have trawlers dragging the bottom of the fishing grounds during the spawning season they will drag up a lot of fish before they have time to deposit their spawn, and they drag up a lot of young fish. On the other side of the Atlantic the fish are being depleted. On the banks they are being depleted. The minority report of the Royal Commission says that it might be advisable that the different governments interested in this fishing question should try to come to some arrangement whereby the fishing grounds would be protected from complete destruction.

It might be a good thing if some international agreement could be arrived at by which trawlers would not fish through the spawning season. We have a close season on salmon, we have a close season on trout, and we have a close season on smelts. Possibly it would be a good thing to have a close season on cod and haddock. If not, it may be found in the course of years that our fishing grounds have become depleted.

I do not know, gentlemen, that I have anything else to say on the question. There are a few other things in the bill that we do not approve of. To make the lobster season fixed by law is something that on the eastern coast of Nova Scotia is not going to work very well. Sometimes we have ice to contend with.

*By Mr. Short:*

Q. We have it fixed now by regulation, but the idea is to make it statutory instead of leaving it in the hands of the Department.

*By Mr. Ernst:*

Q. This bill provides that the season shall be changed only by Act of Parliament, not by the Department. The idea is to make it statutory, so that it cannot be changed, it cannot be extended. You have to do with ice conditions?—A. Yes. It does not happen often, but it does now and again. We have heavy ice down there now.

I will not take up any more of your time, gentlemen. I have told you what we think on these questions, and on the trawler question. Of course it is up to you to deal with the question as you think best. We have to submit to the laws of the country, and we have to abide by them, but we are not going to be satisfied unless severe restrictions are put upon the operations of steam trawlers. We consider that the fisheries question is not settled at all unless