

tury. The fishermen are on the same banks to-day, and the banks are as prolific and as well stocked as when the fishermen first came. It is a question of giving the fishermen an opportunity to put the fish on the market whenever they catch them. That is the problem for the Government. Can they do anything?

Mr. F. B. McCURDY (Shelburne and Queens): Mr. Speaker, the House will, I trust, unanimously adopt the resolution under consideration. The inquiry will come under the direction of my hon. friend the member for Digby. Appreciating, as the House does, the diligent interest of the hon. member in, and his keen understanding of, the problems surrounding the fishing industry, the more readily will it consent to the committing of this matter to the committee over whose deliberations my hon. friend so ably presides.

The investigation of the subject will be peculiarly interesting because any benefits to follow will be twofold in their effect, in that they may advance the interest of the consumer as well as that of the primary producer, the hardy fishermen who constitute the commercial and social fabric of the communities in so many of the important districts particularly along the eastern seaboard of Canada.

The divergence in market prices existing at points of production and consumption in a great many lines of business in Canada and elsewhere has been a matter of bewilderment in many cases, even to those most directly engaged in such businesses. Official inquiries as to the primary causes for such divergences both in Canada and the United States have in different instances been made. I believe some of these inquiries have resulted in improvement in conditions, and it seems to me that of all lines of business that of the catching and marketing of fresh fish lends itself best to an inquiry such as is proposed.

The difficulties of operating a diversified fishing business will readily suggest themselves to all who consider the fundamental necessities of such an industry.

The food value of fish has long been very widely recognized, and is doubtless attracting more attention year by year. It is, of course, of the greatest importance that the product should reach the market in the freshest condition possible, otherwise consumption will not be encouraged. A considerable improvement of conditions in the trade has already been accomplished

by Government aid to cold storage, the provision of refrigerator cars and of a fast refrigerator freight service, and other ways in which the Government has assisted.

Should the inquiry develop that there are substantial ways by which further Government assistance can improve conditions under which the industry operates, the Government should not be slow, and I am satisfied, will not be slow, to recognize the desirability of giving such assistance.

During the past ten years, a great deal of governmental attention has been given to particular industries in Canada. Generous bounties were made available to producers of iron, steel, lead and other metals; a system of interior and terminal elevators has been provided to foster the grain interest; steamship subsidies have been granted to encourage and promote general export business; enormous sums of money have been paid out in railway subsidies, and immense obligations undertaken by means of bond guarantees to provide railway transportation, and a programme has been undertaken involving the expenditure of \$10,000,000 in the improvement of the great agricultural industry of the country.

All the above have been put forward in the general interest, and industry has been quickened and conditions improved as a result of many of the expenditures mentioned. It can be expected then that generous consideration will be given by Parliament of any feasible assistance required by the very important basic fishing industry.

The total value of the fish catch of Canada for the fiscal year 1913-14, according to reports furnished by the Department of the Naval Service, amounted to \$33,207,748, and for 1914-15, to \$31,264,631.

There possibly exists the temptation that Parliament, in the exploitation of our new found prairie wealth and magnificent resources of the western part of Canada, should overlook the older, but no less substantial, resources to whose value we may have become somewhat calloused, on account of long knowledge and association.

So long ago as the year 1758, the fishery was one of the most important industries in the whole country. A very interesting account of those fisheries is given in Brown's "History of Cape Breton." It states that 726 vessels and 1,555 shallops, which is a smaller type of fishing vessel, employed 15,138 men,—the number engaged in the fishing industry of Cape