

In 1933 there was no Minister of Fisheries, but there was an acting minister whose name was Mr. Duranleau. While the house was in session, an order in council was passed allowing these seine boats to fish in this area. Protest was made by myself and others to the acting minister and, later, on the floor of this house. The explanation given by the acting minister for allowing seine boats to fish in the gulf of Georgia related to quality only. I should like to read one or two extracts from a letter sent by the then acting Minister of Fisheries to myself, stating why he considered the seine boats should be allowed to operate in this area to catch what are called pink salmon. He claimed that the seines could catch them out in the open, and they would be of better quality and so enable the Canadian fishing industry to compete successfully in markets abroad. His whole letter is a setting forth of that argument. He said in part

If these advanced fish could be caught before Fraser river water is reached, their value for canning would be safeguarded. A canned product of a valuation of from one-half million to a million dollars is involved. The question thus resolves itself into one as to whether a type of gear will be permitted that will be effective in acquiring these fish for a first-grade article of commerce, or of permitting an economic loss and waste that will accrue if it is not allowed.

After the order in council was passed, the acting minister and his officials started to bolster up the argument that the purpose of allowing the seine boats in this area was to get better quality pink salmon. They said that the gill net boats could not or did not catch the fish in the same place as the seines, and the quality of their catch was not as good as that of the seines. Knowing that an agitation had started against the use of seines, the fisheries department sent out letters to the industry. I have one here, dated September 27, 1933, which was sent out to the canneries, with a view, I claim, of bolstering up the action of the department and the acting minister in allowing seines in this area. I have not time to read it all, but Mr. MacLeod, supervisor of fisheries, sent this out to the industry, and the last clause reads:

I have been further requested to obtain from each cannery manager a communication setting out his opinion as to whether the seine-caught fish were superior for canning purposes as compared to fish caught by means of gill nets, and also if the authority to use purse seines in the gulf of Georgia has been the means of raising the standard of district No. 1 pack of pink salmon.

I claimed at the time and I still maintain that that letter was worded in a leading way. There was an inference to be drawn from

it; the cannery men knew when they got this letter just what the departmental officials wanted. And those cannery interests that had seine boats sent back the report that these seine boats caught pink salmon of better quality than the gill nets. But, Mr. Speaker, this whole matter was a farce, as I can illustrate in just a moment. There were two types of gear operating in this area at one and the same time—seine boats and gill nets. Both brought their catches alongside the wharves at the canneries; they emptied their fish on the cannery floor one after another. So the fish lying on the floor, ready for canning, would be a mixture of pink salmon caught by seines and pink salmon caught by gill nets, all in one heap. Yet some of the cannery men came back with an official reply to the departmental officials in which they stated that in their opinion the salmon caught by the seine boats was of superior quality. There was nothing in the world to substantiate that statement. At that time the inspection board were asked to inquire into the authenticity of this declaration, and their reply is given in a brief which was presented to the fisheries committee by the then deputy minister of fisheries, Doctor Found, when this whole matter was under discussion there. The inspection board were asked as to the quality of the salmon caught by seine boats as against that of the fish caught by gill nets, and this is what they said:

The board had no information regarding each parcel as to whether packed from seined or gill-netted pinks and so can deal with the question in only a general way—

That is a fairly direct statement; yet ever since the order in council—perhaps up to the present day, although I am not sure of that—the departmental officials have endeavoured to bolster up the action taken in 1933, when for the first time by order in council the seine boats were admitted into the gulf of Georgia or the estuary of the Fraser river. In my protest at that time I pointed out to the then acting Minister of Fisheries that this step, under the guise of enabling the seine boats to catch the variety of salmon called pink, was the thin end of the wedge; and that if they were allowed to remain, these seine boats would catch every other variety of salmon coming from outside waters and heading through the strait of Juan de Fuca to the Fraser river, which is exactly what has taken place.

It is true that there was an inspection board in existence at that time, but the way in which that board operated was a scandal, if I might use that term. I should like to use stronger language, but since I am in the House