

Proceedings at the Legislative Council

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grounds, nor did the codfish come to the land to search for the lobster breeding grounds. He did not agree with any person being allowed to catch lobsters for their own use. If one section was permitted to take them every other section would be justified in asking for the same privilege. He believed the Bill should go through in its entirety.

HON. MR. ANDERSON in speaking of the scientific aspect did not use his own words. He was quoting from men of authority. So far as the codfish eating the lobster eggs, it was not necessary that the lobster should resort to the codfishery grounds. There was no reason why the codfish did not seek food along the shore and consume the lobster eggs. We had not given attention to the industry as did other countries, and he was prepared to support any measure to restore this once important fishery.

HON. MR. STEER believed it would be a great pity and a severe blow to any good that might result from the Bill if the idea became broadcasted that people could catch lobsters from their own use. The lobster catch during the last fifteen years had dropped from 50, to 5,000 cases. The partial depletion of the fishery to some extent had been brought about by allowing fishermen to catch lobsters in the fall. Nothing had been achieved in a monetary way by allowing the fishermen to go on while on the other hand it hastened the shortage of the catch. The idea should not be allowed to go abroad that concessions had been granted to everyone, and those who infringe upon the law should be properly dealt with.

MR. MORINE said the principle of this Act was one of sacrifice. It was the people of St. Barbe who were called upon to do this, not the others who casually catch lobsters and market them in the fresh state. Granting concessions suggested was not the reasoning of the head but the reasoning of the heart, which reasoning had resulted in many of our laws being broken with impunity. If casual fishermen, to catch lobsters for their own use, were allowed to interfere with the fishing grounds by setting traps and lobster pots, the Bill would be ineffective. We have reached a time when we must act with our heads. At the outset of the World War a close season was suggested, and if that suggestion had been carried out we would have a wonderful industry in the lobster fishery today. If the measure proposed at that time had been boldly carried into effect there would be no need for the measure now before the House. Now the Government was going to carry the measure into effect even though sacrifices had to be made. With reference to Hon. Mr. Anderson, the law always provided that no lobster should be taken from 5 or 9 inches, but he remembered in Fortune Bay 25 years ago where the number of lobsters required to fill a can was amazing.

HON. MR. ELLIS did not wish that any amendment would be introduced that would in any way stultify the Act. One of the Hon. members had remarked that if the people of Portugal Cove were allowed to catch lobsters and sell them in their fresh state the catch would not amount to as much as 2 per cent. of the total catch. If this concession were granted what right would we have to prevent the people of Bonne Bay from catching them and shipping them to Grand Falls and other places, in the fresh state? We should not grant a privilege to one that we would deny another. The members of the Lower House, who, no doubt, were closer to the people than the members of this Chamber, saw no reason that individuals should catch lobsters for their private use, when discussing the Bill. He would not like to see any Amendment that would interfere with the Bill in any way. He was glad to hear the Hon. Leader of the Government express himself that if the fishermen of Bonne Bay suffered through the Act that the matter of compensation would be considered.

HON. MR. TEMPLEMAN desired to know if the Inspector of Lobster Fisheries had left any records on file that could be of help in discussing the Bill. There was a person so engaged some time ago, and so far as he knew was paid for the work. He had been informed that this gentleman carried on a lobster farm or such like, and should know more about the lobster industry than the members of the House. He himself had caught lobsters in various ways, and never saw any difference in their habits. In stormy weather they attached themselves to the rocks for protection, and those who failed were washed on shore with the sea.

HON. MR. WINTER had seen the class of lobster caught in Conception Bay, and exposed here for sale in the fresh state. They were very small in size and it was almost a pity to take them out of the water. It would be to the advantage of the fishermen of Portugal Cove if they had a close season for three years. The lobsters would grow to a large size and they would sell at remunerative prices. Those taken in recent years were altogether too small and not fit to eat.

because there was no meat on them. HON. MR. TEMPLEMAN forgot to mention that there was a natural close season for the much discussed crustacean. In the fall they cast off their shells and became soft and unfit for food. In fact they were unfit to be taken after the 5th of August in any year.

HON. DR. ROBINSON said that for thirty years this question had been an active one, and successive Governments and Boards had recommended a close season. The Hon. Leader had spoken of sacrifice. He (Hon. Dr. Robinson) thought the sacrifice was in large measure that of the Government's which had the courage to bring in this Bill. A splendid industry had been ruined. He was in entire accord with the Hon. Leader for the Government in this matter. The Bill was experimental, but a practical measure. The lobster fishery was of tremendous potential value to the country, and we should not, as had been done with our caribou, stand idly by and watch the destruction of a great resource of wealth. He personally thanked the Government for introducing the measure which he hoped would have the cordial support of the House.

HON. MR. BISHOP did not intend to offer any opposition to the Bill. No one was more impressed than he was as to its need. He did not, however, recede from his opinion that to permit people to take a lobster or a dozen from the waters for private use would have any effect on the increase or decrease of the fishery, the quantity would be so small. It was absurd to compare the caribou with the lobster, as one of the latter would propagate more in one season than all our caribou in 50 years. He was not disposed to offer any suggestion to interfere with the law and there should be no infringement. He considered the measure was a good one and agreed with all as to the necessity for it.

HON. MR. GIBBS stated that he was in thorough accord with the principle of the Bill. He had mentioned Portugal Cove, not for the sake of discriminating in one part of the country as against another, but because of its being in close proximity to St. John's, and the people of that place having for many years been engaged in the lobster trade. The suggestion had been thrown out to see if it would be possible for them to continue. Judging by the tenor of the debate this did not appear possible, and he did not wish to press his view for he felt that the effort of the Government to restore the prestige of this valuable industry if accepted would mean a great deal for Newfoundland.

HON. MR. DAWE corroborated the statement made by the Hon. the leader of the Government that the propagating of lobsters was slow. In Bay Roberts there some twenty years ago lobsters were plentiful, there were only very few caught at the present time. These were small and for local consumption only. He was very interested to hear a discussion on the fishery. Lately he had noticed that fish from Nova Scotia had been marketed on the other side. He considered that there was a great prospect of a fresh fish trade between Newfoundland and the English market. When in Scotland some years ago he had seen fresh codfish for sale in the market which had been caught 1000 miles from the market, a week previous, and was in splendid condition. He regretted that more interest was not taken in the development of this industry with the Old Country. We are nearer the market and can send it 48 hours sooner than Nova Scotia. There is no place on this side of the water which had better opportunities to export fresh fish to the Billingsgate market than Newfoundland. While not much was to be expected from frozen fish, he considered if Labrador or Newfoundland fish were chilled and exported a good trade could be developed. It would only take six days to place the fish on the English market. The statements made in reference to the lobster fishery by the Hon. the Leader for the Government were quite correct, and Mr. Dawe heartily corroborated them.

HON. DR. MOSDELL considered that the closing down of the lobster industry in St. Barbe District would mean a great deal to the people engaged therein. The codfishery was not carried on there to a great extent, and the herring fishery was rather a disappointment. If exemption were granted for selling lobsters fresh it would not be the slightest advantage as there was no local market, and the amount used for table consumption was small. Some years ago when living on that part of the coast, he noticed that every edible part of the fish, except that used for canning purposes was thrown aside. Perhaps things were different now. In view of a close season in lobsters and the conditions of the other fisheries on this particular part of the coast he would personally welcome anything which the Government, through the Board, might do to develop the herring fishery, in which many of the people could engage.

HON. MR. PRESIDENT endorsed the statement made by the Hon. Dr. Robinson that credit was due to the Government for the courage exhibited in attacking this question. He hoped that the same courage would be exhibited by the officials responsible for the carrying out of the Bill when law. If any criticism were to be offered it was that the close season was not long enough, for as the Hon. member had so well said, the lobster was slow in growing. In spite of all that was done in U.S.A. in the way of propagating measures, the lobster canning industry could not be developed. There was no lobster canning factories in U.S.A. He, although not an expert on the matter, had given the subject a great deal of consideration. In 1912 an exhaustive debate had taken place and reference was made to it. A scheme at that time was adopted by the Government and two men, Mr. Badcock and Mr. Desjardins, were authorized to go about the coast in motor boats to buy up lobsters at ten cents each and drop them back into the sea, with the hope of bettering the fishery. Hopes were not realized, however. The work of Professor Herrick, who has written a 400 page book on the Life and History of the American Lobster, and also that of Professor Field who is in charge of propagative research work in U.S.A. were mentioned, as was also John Rourke, a man of relative standing in Norway. In twenty years it had been shown that there was a considerable decrease in the number of cases packed locally, the quantity dropping from 76,000 cases to 4,000. This was a strong argument in favour of the present Bill. It was not necessary to employ experts in connection with it. We could not afford to pay the salaries. We have only to use the material supplied in abundance by the U. S. and Canadian Fishery Departments and which can be obtained by the expenditure of only a stamp. No effort was at present being made to collect statistics which would prove beneficial progress had been made in the direction of other industries but our fisheries department seemed to be in a most hopeless state. This was not said in the spirit of criticism and he was not blaming one government more than another. The President closed by quoting from the Canadian fish report, dealing with the hatcheries of Canada, which went to prove that the close season of three years would not be sufficient to place the fisheries where they were 25 or 30 years ago.

HON. MR. POWER considered that it would be a great mistake to grant privileges to any particular place as it would open the door to others to look for the same privileges. The measure before the House was a good one and badly needed to encourage the propagation of lobsters, a valuable adjunct to our fisheries. HON. MR. WINTER moved that the Fisheries Regulations Bill, Hon. Mr. Shea in the chair. The Committee reported the Bill with some amendment, and it was ordered to be read a third time on to-morrow. The House went into Committee of the Whole on the Bill respecting Eggs from churches, etc., with Hon. Dr. Mosdell in the chair. The Committee rose and reported progress and asked leave to sit again. House went into committee of the whole on a bill respecting taxation on Banks, Hon. Mr. Ayre in the chair. The Committee reported the Bill passed without amendment and it was ordered to be read a third time on to-morrow. HON. PRESIDENT read a message from the House of Assembly that they had passed the accompanying bill relating to the regulating of traffic on Highways and requesting concurrence therein. On motion of Hon. Mr. Morine said Bill was read a first time. HON. MR. MORINE asked for unanimous consent of the House on the second reading of the bill. It involved no principle other than traffic regulations, was concurrent with the High Roads bill, and required passage at an early date so that it would be enforced by Tuesday next and the Commission appointed. At present certain fees due April 1st, are payable to the Municipal Council, while under the new acts they would be collected by the Commission and he did not want to see any confusion. As to the financial and he had talked over the matter with Hon. Mr. Cook, the Mayor, and the Council have no objection to the Bill.

HON. DR. ROBINSON desired to make himself clear as to some remarks previously made as to his opposition to Bills passing different readings at the one session. What he intended to say was that he opposed any Bill going through this House in all its stages at one session. He saw no reason why the first and second readings should not be taken the same day or the Committee stage and third reading but not the second reading and Committee.

By unanimous consent the Bill was then read a second time and ordered to be committed on to-morrow. The House adjourned at 5:45 until 3 p.m. to-morrow.

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