

these good men; we said to them, "You will look at this salmon. If in your judgment it is good you will pass it." Here are the exact words of the order in council defining the duties of these men; it is subsection 27 (a):

Canned salmon that are found by the board of inspection to be fresh, firm, well-packed and in good, merchantable condition, shall be approved and a certificate in the form attached marked A shall be issued therefor.

If the inspector found that the fish was in that condition in the tin, fresh, firm, well-packed and in good, merchantable condition, he would issue the certificate, but if he did not issue the certificate, if it were anything inferior to that standard, it had to be marked second quality, and that absolutely damned the sale of it, because you cannot sell canned fish marked second quality.

That was the section under which these men acted; it was within their sound judgment as to whether the fish complied with that requirement. Now I come to the order in council which was passed on February 3 last. It simply added a proviso to the words I have just read, as follows:

Provided that no certificate shall be issued for canned salmon that had not been landed fresh at a cannery for canning within twenty-four hours after being caught, excepting fish that has been gutted and iced immediately after being caught.

They have their tenses mixed; it is not even grammatical. However we will let that go. You will observe that it stipulates that the fish must be landed at the cannery fresh for canning within twenty-four hours of being caught. It does not say that it must be canned within twenty-four hours, so that vitiates the usefulness of the whole provision right there, to say nothing of other reasons that might be advanced. It may be landed at the cannery within twenty-four hours, but the fish may lie there for another twelve hours to suit the convenience of the cannery man, because there is nothing to prevent that being done.

In the preamble of the order in council it is stated:

Whereas the acting Minister of Fisheries, on the advice of the deputy Minister of Fisheries and the responsible officers of the department, and with the approval—

With the approval of whom?

—of the salmon canners, recommends that, etc. . . .

It is with the approval of the salmon canners, the very people whose goods are to be inspected and perhaps severely dealt with. That order in council creates an absolute departure from the principles that the government had already laid down. Formerly the

test was simply the appearance and condition of the fish. The question that had to be decided was, did it comply with that stipulation that it should be fresh, firm, well-packed and in good merchantable condition. It was left to the judgment of competent, experienced, reliable men. They did not have to consider the history of the salmon or its pedigree or ancestry, or where it came from or anything else. It might have come from California or Mexico or the Arctic pole; all they had to do was to use their judgment and determine whether it was of the required quality. If it did they would approve; if not, they would not. What is the situation now? They may be perfectly prepared to approve it; the fish may come up to every word of that requirement; but if in addition to that it is not proved that the fish has been delivered at the cannery within twenty-four hours of its being caught then it must be condemned.

Now how are these men to know whether the fish has been delivered within that time or not? It might have been delivered within ten hours of being caught and still it might be the duty of the inspector on inspection to condemn it; that would be quite understandable. But what is the test? Is it delivery within twenty-four hours of the fish being caught, or is the test to be the question whether or not the fish comes up to the stipulated requirement that it shall be fresh, firm, well-packed and in good merchantable condition? There is no question at all that in the final analysis this last is the principle on which the inspectors must act. If it is bad, it is the inspector's duty to condemn it even though the fish may have been put into the tin alive. But if on the other hand the inspector finds that it is perfectly good, quite fresh and of the highest quality, he cannot give a certificate unless it can be proved that the fish was landed at a cannery within twenty-four hours of being caught. Now I should like to know how any inspector can get that information? Why the need for this sudden and violent change of policy, changing the whole system right round, from the inspection of the canned product to a question as to the time within which the fish has been delivered at the cannery?

The system was lovely; the department at Ottawa said so. The chief supervisor in British Columbia says so, and he is the last word as an authority on fish, certainly in his own opinion. This was not asked for by the officials; at any rate it was not asked for by them as late as January 20, because I have the letter right here. It was not asked for by the board of inspectors. Now would you