

than fish, and partly because her own fishermen have been catching more cod all the time and her need to buy from us has been thereby reduced.

When the terms of union were being negotiated between Canada and Newfoundland, the use of Newfoundland ports by these foreign ships was one of the issues. It was not a controversial issue, because Canada readily conceded that special provision for the use of Newfoundland ports by those foreign ships should continue to be made. They had not been using any of the Atlantic ports of Canada. Provision was made to maintain the traditional policy of the island's foreign trading relations with those particular countries. Since then everything has gone along smoothly, the government of Canada having granted yearly licences to meet the requirements.

As I say, the purchases by Portugal and Spain of our salt cod have fallen off very considerably. Our need to sell this product in those countries is no less than it ever was, but I am not now suggesting the policy whereby that trade may be increased. What I am suggesting is that our power to negotiate with these countries be retained. Let us get what we can for what we give. Of course, I do not wish to imply that we are losing that power under this bill, but a little later on I shall make a point which bears on that.

What I wish to make clear at the moment is that the problem to which I have been referring is one that particularly concerns Newfoundland. It has been tied in with Newfoundland's economy for centuries. There must not be any thought that what is needed is an across-the-board adjustment applying to the other provinces as well, for the fact is that they are not now and have never been vitally interested in this matter and any new interest created would be at the expense of Newfoundland.

Our ports in Newfoundland are used by vessels from these foreign countries today more than ever before. During the past summer and fall it was not unusual to see in the harbour of St. John's ten, fifteen or twenty ships from these countries tied up while taking on supplies and bait, loading salt, etc., for the voyage to the Grand Banks. The increase in the number of these vessels using those fishing grounds suggests that some time the area may be called the Banks of the Iberian Peninsula rather than the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.

The visits of these foreign ships to our ports are of considerable trading value. Yet I will tell you that the value of the business

done through sales to those vessels is insignificant in comparison with the bigger issue of maintenance of trading relations for the disposal of our fish. I am sure that there is not a merchant in Newfoundland who would say that the trade resulting from the use of our ports by these foreign vessels has any importance in comparison with the importance of a clearly defined and beneficial policy for our fish export trade with the countries I have mentioned.

I wish to make this point very clear. It is stated that the purpose of the bill is to revise the existing Customs and Fisheries Protection Act. But as I said, the bill is not entirely revisory. One new factor it introduces is the inclusion of the Atlantic coast ports, that is of the Maritime Provinces, under the same arrangement as Newfoundland ports, for the servicing of these foreign vessels. Now, I do not think that the Maritime Provinces ports would naturally be used very extensively, since they are farther away from the Grand Banks than our Newfoundland ports are. I think it is quite possible that at some time, according to the present trend, the province of Newfoundland may have to ask the government of Canada to revise the policy for the use of Newfoundland ports by these foreign boats. The prevailing system has been developed and maintained because the countries from which these vessels come have been and are still to some extent our customers. But these boats have not used the Maritime Provinces ports in the past, and it seems to me quite likely that if the law is changed and these boats use not only the ports of Newfoundland but those of Nova Scotia and even of New Brunswick, then at some future time if the Act comes up for revision or if it is thought advisable in the interest of the fisheries of Newfoundland to introduce restrictions, there might be a conflict between the provinces over policy. The Maritime Provinces would be interested only because of desiring to develop, one might say, shopkeeper trading with those foreign vessels, whereas Newfoundland would regard that trade as insignificant when compared with the fish export relations with those countries.

I presume that this bill will be referred to a committee. I should like to see it studied very carefully there in its full significance. Also I think that the government of the province of Newfoundland should be consulted and asked for its opinion as to the future policy to be employed under such a law as this. It has been and is a most important issue to Newfoundland, and I hope it will be viewed in that light by the committee.