

Supply—Fisheries

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): Not for salt fish.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Fresh fish is much higher.

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): Salt fish was seven or eight cents a pound more, but the price is down now. The hon. member for Queens-Lunenburg has mentioned a floor under the prices of fish products. We are exporting about seventy per cent of our fish, and if we put a floor under the prices we are sure that that floor may not be accepted by the nations taking our fish.

After having discussed the matter with members of the united fishermen's association, we believe that the fisherman must be put in the position where he can produce about twice as much fish. This fish must be sold at a price that will create a market. The fish must be in good condition and there must be a continuity of supply. Those are the three essential things and we are working along these lines in order to help the fishermen. Subsidies are being granted to fishermen for the construction of draggers and long liners which will allow them to catch more fish per man hour than they do to-day. As I explained to the hon. gentleman a few minutes ago, we are going to design unit fishing plants, encourage oyster and clam farming, and conduct further scientific investigations. Experimental work is being carried on along these lines. We do not think we can serve the fishermen by any other method.

Of course we shall have to find markets, and markets will depend upon price and quality. The western fisheries are another matter, and I intend to explain what we are going to do there when we discuss the appropriation of \$1,000,000 to cover the development of fisheries on the Fraser and Skeena rivers.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The minister is not able to tell me what the sardine situation is on the bay of Fundy?

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): No, I cannot.

Mr. BLACK (Cumberland): I should like to support the hon. member for York-Sunbury, the hon. junior member for Halifax and other hon. members from Nova Scotia who have spoken on behalf of the fishing industry in that province. Those of us who have knowledge of the fishing industry must admit that it has returned to its workers the poorest reward of any industry in Canada. Fishermen have had to operate under the most difficult conditions and have received the smallest returns. They have had to live under the

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

lowest standard of living of any class in Canada. I have been at a wharf when they were bringing in a catch and the price paid was only fifty cents per 100 pounds for whole fish. That was during the worst period for the industry. I am glad that the returns are higher to-day, although they are not as high as they should be, compared with those of other industries.

I wish to support what the hon. junior member for Halifax said when appealing to the Minister of Fisheries that due consideration be given to this industry. I wonder why the hon. junior member for Halifax does not appeal directly to the minister from Nova Scotia. He might get direct action by appealing through the minister of whom he is the assistant, the Minister of National Defence. In that way this industry might receive the justice and consideration to which it is entitled.

I am particularly interested in the brief that has been referred to, and I am disappointed that the minister has not given a direct answer to the requests made by the United Maritime Fishermen's Association. They have been holding conventions in Amherst in my constituency for some years and I am pleased that the minister was able to attend the last one. They made an appeal to the minister and they have submitted copies of their brief to members from the maritime provinces. The convention was held on November 24 and 25, 1943. I should think in justice to the fishermen of the maritime provinces and to the members of the house the minister, before his estimates pass, should give a statement with respect to the representations made by the United Maritime Fishermen's Association.

Everyone in Nova Scotia is interested in the welfare of the fishermen. I do not represent a constituency directly interested in deep sea fishing, although we are the centre of the lobster industry of the world. As I have said before, the waters between my constituency and that of Prince in Prince Edward Island represented by the Minister of National Defence are the centre of the lobster industry of the world.

In Cumberland the small rivers on the north Cumberland strait have another fishing industry, the smelt industry. There are a number of shallow rivers with winding outlets to the sea. For fifteen or twenty years they were allowed an earlier fishing season than applies to the other places on Northumberland strait. Because these are shoal rivers with outlets winding through sand banks these rivers fill with ice in early winter and the fishermen are not able to make their catch as fishermen can in deeper waters. Therefore, they were granted an earlier season, and it closed earlier. As a