

Minister of Trade and Commerce. The explanation of the hon. Minister of Agriculture, while very elaborate, is not very satisfactory to the people I represent. I would like to ask him how far the negotiations have gone on, and whether he is in a position to state that the people in Prince Edward Island, who are depending on this cold storage accommodation, will have proper ships this year in which to send their products to the English markets?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. I trust that when the supplementary estimates come down I shall be able to give the hon. gentleman the explanation he requires. Just at present negotiations are going on with two or three separate parties, and I am hardly in a position to go into details.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Victoria, N.S.) I highly approve of the remarks made by the hon. and learned leader of the opposition, in urging the necessity of having a better and more rapid mode of transit for the fresh fish of Cape Breton to the Canadian markets. It is a matter of regret to us to find that the markets here and west of us are supplied from Portland instead of from the Strait of Canso. The cold storage system which is about to be adopted for bait is a very different thing from what is required to forward fresh fish in proper condition to the best markets in Canada. We require not only good cold storage, but we require rapid transit, so that the fish may be got to these markets in good condition; and the earlier they get there, of course, the better it is both for the shippers and those who have the advantage of eating the fish. I think it would also be of advantage to the people of the west if they would get into the habit of using more salt water fish. It might expand their ideas, and enable them to take broader views of public questions than they appear to do at present.

Mr. ALCORN. Will the minister state in detail what steps are proposed to be taken, in the words of this item, for securing improvement and recognition of the quality of Canadian farm products?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I shall be very happy to do that; but if the hon. gentleman will allow me to call it six o'clock, I shall give him some details immediately after dinner, as I would rather not be interrupted while giving them.

At six o'clock, committee took recess.

After Recess.

Committee resumed at eight o'clock.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. When the House rose at recess, my hon. friend opposite asked me what was done by the department to secure an improved

Mr. HACKETT.

recognition of the quality of Canadian farm products in foreign markets. I am very glad to have this opportunity of making a short statement with regard to this work. It is one which has largely been developed. The department has taken up the question of cold storage, which has now taken a wider area than would be indicated by the term, although in a general way the lines of work are cognate to cold storage transportation, and the proper preservation of food products during shipment abroad. When, some years ago, I asked for a vote of money to enable me to establish a chain of cold storage transportation, the object I principally had in view was the transportation of our Canadian butter into the English market. For years our cheese trade had been in a most satisfactory condition. The reputation of our cheese abroad had become very great and the business was a profitable one, but our Canadian butter had not a very good reputation, and did not command the high price it should, owing largely, if not altogether, to the lack of proper transportation facilities. Our butter in Canada was made very well, its quality in the Canadian market was excellent, but on reaching the English market it showed a certain deterioration. To remedy this difficulty, we provided cold storage facilities, equipping the main lines of railway with refrigerator cars and establishing cold warehouses where the butter could be stored until shipped from Montreal, Halifax and St. John, and providing mechanical cold storage accommodation on board the trains and steamers. Up to that time what work was done in the way of cold storage was done in furnishing ice-cold storage and had not accomplished the object desired. The moment that mechanical cold storage accommodation was provided, the attention of our people was turned to utilizing it for other products. Prof. Robertson and myself, when in England, found an ample opening for the sale of our poultry in that country, and we immediately undertook experiments in connection with the fattening and proper dressing of our poultry and sending it forward, which resulted in a pretty satisfactory trade being established, with the prospect of a very large increase. Attempts were made also to send forward such delicate products as peaches, pears and grapes, and, in a few instances, plums. These were partially successful. But we found that with the best cold storage accommodation, it was difficult to carry some of the fruit in the ordinary way of packing and handling them. We found that the result depended largely on the exact condition of the fruit when packed in cold storage on this side. It did not matter how well the transportation arrangements were perfected, if the fruit was not in a certain exact condition when packed. We found that of two specimens of a particular variety of fruit, packed in similar boxes, carried under ex-