

Supply—Fisheries

Scotia, some 38 have been granted in the counties of Yarmouth and Digby, 32 of these being in Digby county alone. It is from Digby county that most of the objections are being received.

I would appreciate it if the minister could clarify this situation before his estimates are completed, for the benefit not only of the fishermen but of the people generally. The people in that part of Nova Scotia are divided in their opinions but they are trying to arrive at a fair and objective decision as to whether or not the use of trawlers and draggers is in the best interests of the fishing industry and as to whether or not their use is going to be permanently injurious to those who are hand-lining from small boats.

Mr. Mayhew: Mr. Chairman, the twelve mile limit is set up by a regulation governing our own nationals, and has to do with boats over 100 feet long. That regulation can be amended only by this House of Commons. Personally I cannot see the justice of allowing people from other countries to fish up to the three mile limit when our people must stay beyond the twelve mile limit. It was put into effect for the benefit of the inshore fishermen.

I would ask the hon. member to read this pamphlet which was put out by the fisheries research board. If he does I think he will get answers to most of his questions. We are constantly studying the matter and are not losing any time on it. It is a most interesting problem. We are trying to reconcile two factions and it is not easy. You get that problem quite often in the fishing industry. Everyone who catches one type of fish feels that the other fellow is doing wrong.

Mr. Higgins: Can the minister state whether or not there is any worth-while depletion taking place on the Grand Banks?

Mr. Mayhew: I am told that there is no evidence of any depletion on the Grand Banks.

Mr. McLure: I should like to make a few observations about the lobster fishing industry in Prince Edward Island. Certain regulations have been laid down for the conservation of lobsters which provide considerable revenue for our fishermen. However, illicit catching and trapping of lobsters is going on continually in the province and this is liable to destroy the industry. I do not know what effort the minister is making to get proper officers to enforce the law, but I do know that he will find that poaching and illicit fishing is proving a real menace to our lobster industry.

(Mr. Kirk (Digby-Yarmouth).)

The parliamentary assistant will bear me out when I say that this illicit fishing begins immediately after the regular season closes. These people are unable to operate canning factories openly, so they can the lobster in shacks and the product that goes to market is not very good. In most cases when you open a can prepared in these small factories you are able to tell immediately that the lobster has been caught illicitly.

Is the department going to get after this illicit fishing and protect those fishermen who are not engaging in that type of operation? I know of one fishing community where the fishermen themselves do the patrolling. They watch over the fisherman to see that he leaves no gear out when the season ends. If he put out a trap he would be reported immediately. I think it would be an easy matter. I understand that you have aeroplanes flying over the sea to locate traps. Then you have your men on shore. These commodities are not all to be eaten right there. They have to be sold to the wholesalers and should be traceable. These people are ruining the lobster industry for the real fishermen of the province.

Mr. Mayhew: D-day for lobster poaching is the 10th of August, and there is going to be a fight. We expect to win the fight because we are going to use more boats, instructors and other people who know the job, to try to win the fight. It is not only lobster fishing in the province of Prince Edward Island and the maritime provinces generally. There is also poaching in the province of British Columbia from which I come. I do not know of any more despicable occupation than for a man to engage in that kind of poaching. We are spending large sums of money every year to protect the fisheries, and we are not going to be beaten by a few fellows who are trying to spoil the industry for future generations.

Mr. McLure: How many fines were collected in Prince Edward Island for illicit lobster fishing last year and how much gear was destroyed? There were quite a few men employed in patrolling, and they did not seem to get anywhere in what they were doing.

Mr. Mayhew: I cannot give the hon. member the answer to that question tonight. I am informed we have the information and I will get it for the hon. member some time before we finish.

Mr. Kickham: On the matter of poaching, speaking for the riding which I represent, there is no poaching at all. As evidence of that, last year there were nine fish guardians,