

increasingly severe competition the producers have had to meet from foreign countries. Before the Great War Europe exported very little fish to South America, the West Indies and the United States, which constituted up to that time our best and almost exclusive market. After the war, some countries induced their people to enter the dried fish industry on a large scale, and public funds were provided to increase production and keep down the cost of production to individuals. By the means of subventions, subsidies and bounties, Norway and Newfoundland have displaced our Canadian product in markets which were formerly enjoyed by our exporters.

No one in Canada is responsible for the existence of the present conditions in the salt fish industry. Nevertheless we have to meet a situation in which about twenty thousand persons have to depend for their livelihood, and that of their dependents, on the proceeds of a trade which to-day does not return the cost of production. It may be said that these twenty thousand Canadians should turn to some other occupation. But everyone who is familiar with the geography and the economic conditions of the Atlantic coast knows that it is impossible to absorb that number of people into industries which do not exist. In the localities where these fishermen are situated, the land is not adaptable to profitable farming. There are no manufacturing industries of any kind, and there are no natural industries that could take care of these people.

For the last five years the annual return to those who have been engaged in the production of salt fish averaged about \$190 to each fisherman. With no prospect of any immediate natural improvement, it becomes absolutely necessary either to place these people on relief rolls, or, through some help, enable them to derive from their only possible occupation sufficient to maintain themselves and their dependents.

Commissions, both federal and provincial, public bodies, and socially-minded private individuals, during the last ten years, have investigated these conditions. They have been almost unanimous in recommending that some help should be given to these people to enable them to continue in their present occupation pending an economic readjustment.

It is intended to constitute a board made up of men who have acquired experience in the salt fish industry and who will suggest and bring about improvements in the methods of preparing the fish for export, and in the methods of marketing. It is intended to provide a limited amount of money to enable the board to carry on its work and render some assistance to the fishermen who cannot

make enough out of their industry to take care of themselves and their dependents. The adverse conditions which have prevailed in the dried and salt fish industry have had the effect of forcing many of the Atlantic fishermen to turn to the fresh fish business and the lobster trade. The result has been to force returns in these two branches down to unprofitable levels and bring about a general depression in all branches of the industry. It is hoped that by a revival of the dried and salt fish trade the pressure on the fresh fish and lobster trade will be released. With the expansion of our markets for fresh fish, both at home and abroad, and the expected reduction in the number of those employed in it, one is justified in assuming that better conditions will prevail in the fishing industry and among the fishermen.

Those are the views expressed by the Minister of Fisheries, who introduced this Bill in the House of Commons.

The Bill before us constitutes a board to be known as the Salt Fish Board, to consist of three members appointed by the Governor in Council. One of the members shall be appointed chairman and another vice-chairman. The chairman shall preside at meetings of the board, and, in his absence, the vice-chairman. I will read some sections of the Bill:

4. The Board, with the approval of the Governor in Council, may appoint and employ such technical or other officers, clerks and employees as may be necessary for the conduct of its business and the carrying out of the provisions of this Act.

#### 5. The Board shall

(a) investigate and report to the Minister upon the marketing of salt fish in the export trade and explore all possibilities of opening up new marketing outlets;

(b) devise and recommend to the Minister a plan, or plans, which may be adopted for the orderly marketing of fish, salt or to be salted, with a view to improving conditions and bringing greater returns to the primary producer and the exporter;

(c) study and report to the Minister upon the best methods of preparing salt fish for the various export markets, to include,

(i) the manner of curing and packing and the marking of packages for export;

(ii) arrangements for an adequate inspection of salt fish for export, and the supervising of such;

(d) study and recommend to the Minister means of insuring the use of a proper grade and kind of salt for curing the various species of fish.

#### 6. The Board may—

(a) give assistance to exporters in such form and manner and to such extent as may from time to time be determined by the Board and approved by the Governor in Council, provided that the assistance given to any exporter during any marketing season shall not exceed in value