

*Inspection of Canned Salmon*

And he goes on to say:

We are well aware that our protest will be "as the voice of one crying in the wilderness" yet we feel it to be our duty to make it when, as we see it, sectional legislation that will not stand argument is placed on the statute books of Canada.

I want to quote one which surely is from an independent source, namely a cold storage plant. This I took out of a Conservative paper, and I had no knowledge of it before. The letter from the canneryman also came to me quite unsolicited. I might be making an *ex parte* statement on behalf of the fisherman, but I could not have invented this article in the Victoria paper. This is an article by the manager of a cold storage company on the coast. He says:

Mr. McBride interpreted the twenty-hour limit clause for delivery of purse seining catches to canneries as a blow at the independent fishermen.

Notice that, Mr. Speaker.

He pointed out that it would be extremely difficult for independent fishermen to complete their catch and deliver the salmon to the canneries, either along the west coast, or in Victoria, within twenty-four hours of making the catch.

That is an independent, unbiased opinion from men with whom I have not communicated and whose views I have not requested. Certainly it coincides with the opinion I expressed. I have a letter from the department from which I must quote just one sentence. It says:

From the aspect of preventing competition for the catches of the fishermen this regulation should have no detrimental effect. On the contrary it should result in the fishermen obtaining higher prices for their fish.

If that gets into the press, Mr. Speaker, it will be laughed at from Prince Rupert to Vancouver and from Ketchikan to Seattle. The idea is ridiculous that in a narrow, constricted area, by reducing the number of buyers to one man or one company you are going to increase prices. If that is not enough to make one laugh I do not know what is.

Mr. STEVENS: There is no suggestion in the order in council that the number of buyers should be reduced to one company.

Mr. NEILL: No, but I am talking about the effect.

Mr. STEVENS: Nor is that the effect of the order.

Mr. NEILL: Well, I have read what the manager of the cold storage thinks, so I am not the only one who makes this statement. As I have said, it will result in the independent fishermen being driven out, and that is a very

[Mr. Neill.]

shortsighted policy. It is to the real interest of the cannerymen to support the independent fishermen and not have to invest huge sums of money in equipment and have men on wages and so on. I might say also—and I do not know whether this will have any effect on the government—that is just so much more propaganda for the reds.

Now I should like to sum up the situation very briefly. The order in council is irregular, I contend, because this measure should have been brought in by an act of parliament, and the question should have been referred to the select standing committee on marine and fisheries. Also it is a breach of faith and a departure from the policy which has been followed for quite a number of years. The ostensible reasons given, with which I have dealt, are unworkable and superfluous and I doubt if they are intended to be enforced. I might pause here to say that after all it does not make any difference to my argument whether or not I am correct in saying that this order in council was introduced at the instigation of certain parties for a certain purpose and with a deliberate, preconceived and ulterior motive, or whether I simply make the allegation as I do now that the result will be as I have stated. Let us forget about motives for the moment, and forget about the origin of this measure; at least the result will be as I have stated, no matter why it was brought in. It will put out of business the independent canneries and very nearly ruin the independent fisherman. He is nearly ruined now, and you are going to destroy the market for his product. Already prices are insufficient to maintain a decent livelihood. The fisherman is handicapped by the high price of gasoline and by the phenomenally low price of fish, as well as by the further fact that in many districts the market is lacking altogether. There is no use catching certain grades of fish because there is no market for them, and now the fisherman is to be restricted as to where he can sell his catch. I wonder what hon. gentlemen opposite and those to my right who represent constituencies where wheat is grown would say if they were told that in view of some supposed benefit to be derived from the quality of the wheat they were to be compelled to sell their wheat only to their country elevator. There would be a bloody revolution. It may be said that there are two elevators in the village and that a farmer could sell to either one. How long would it take them to arrange matters between them? There are so many technicalities in connection with the fish trade, and they are so difficult to understand and explain, that it is not easy to see that it is just as impossible in the one case as in the other.