

means be sought for reducing the number of brands of canned salmon. Paragraph 14 states:

That encouragement should be given to fishermen's cooperative unions for the purpose of obtaining their supplies cheaply and of improving their standards of production.

Everyone is trying to do that. Paragraph 15 states:

That overlapping of the inspection acts . . . should be adjusted; that inspection service by the proper authorities should be extended to cover fish reduction plants and retail stores . . .

and so on. Paragraph 16 suggests the employment of express rather than freight for the shipment of fresh fish. That is the report in connection with our fisheries, made by a so-called expert commission. Does anyone wonder why I suggest that so far as any actual help to the fisheries is concerned the report is practically a dud, because I believe whatever it contains of importance already has been taken up by the department, and whatever is contained in the report that is not important was not worth appointing a commission to find out. My hon. friend from Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill) has given me the proper word for the report, and I thank him for it; the report is one of platitudes.

I should like to say just a word with regard to the matter of taxation, the first point mentioned in the report. The other night there was a discussion in connection with the sales tax on salt; a good deal was said to the effect that fishermen should use Canadian salt, and that the government was quite right in imposing a 6 per cent sales tax on salt imported into Canada. Since then I have found that there are 380 men engaged in the whole salt industry in Canada, including the part of the country from which you and I come, Mr. Chairman. I think probably the minister has a report dealing with Canadian salt in connection with our fisheries, and I doubt very much whether it unreservedly supports the ideas expressed by my hon. friend the Minister of Finance with regard to the usability of that salt in the operations of the fishing industry. As a matter of fact the situation is just this: I have talked with those engaged in the fishing industry in my own constituency and I myself did everything in my power to assist Mr. Chambers, in connection with Malagash salt. I endeavoured to get packers and fishermen down there interested in it, and it was with difficulty that they were induced to take it up. So far as its use in connection with their fish was concerned, I am bound to say that the reports were not too satisfactory. My hon. friend

[Mr. Ralston.]

knows what the difficulties are. Mr. Chambers tried to do all he could to meet them, but the unfortunate situation remains. The hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Duff) knows more about the fishing industry than I ever hope to know, and the other night he said that it had not proved satisfactory to the industry. What is the use, under the guise of helping the fishermen, of trying to force them to use material that they consider is not satisfactory, and imposing this six per cent tax on them in connection with salt, which is one of the basic materials they use in their industry? In addition to that, there is a three per cent excise tax, but at the moment I am discussing the sales tax. Salt was always free of sales tax. The Minister of Fisheries suggested that most of the fish is exported anyway and that a rebate could be obtained. Let me give him an illustration and ask him how the fishermen can really get a rebate in connection with salt used on their fish. The fish are placed in butts into a salt pickle. Some of the fish is taken out and made into dried fish for use partly in Canada, and some of it is sent green to the United States. How will anyone tell how much salt is used in connection with exported fish and therefore how much of it is entitled to the rebate? The fish is sold, perhaps, to a jobber in Canada, part of it finding its way to the domestic market, some of it in this part of the country but most of it in the eastern provinces, and a portion is sent to the United States. It is simply impossible, therefore, to tell what proportion of it is entitled to the rebate, and this is merely the imposition of an irritating tax from which the fishermen gets no benefit whatever. Who pays? There is only one man who pays, and that is the fisherman. The minister might say, "But you do not take the tax on a pound of salt and deduct it from the price of the fish." Supposing the dealer pays a cent or a cent and a quarter or a cent and a half a pound, he does not take a fraction of a cent per pound off for the salt. What he will probably do is this: he says, "we have to reduce the price of fish at a certain time to meet market conditions." And the reduction comes three or four days earlier than it otherwise would in order to take care of the sales tax on the salt, and the fisherman pays it. If there is to be an increase in the price of fish, it comes later, that is what takes place, and the fisherman pays the difference. In common with the others who spoke the other night, I protest that this government is not even carrying out