

Arising out of this strike, and because of the acknowledged seriousness and peculiarities of the problem of the B.C. fisheries, an inter-governmental committee was set up, consisting of civil servants of the federal Department of Fisheries and of civil servants of the Department of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources of British Columbia. This committee was instructed to investigate in detail the problems related to the British Columbia salmon industry and the fishing industry generally, and to report and make recommendations, if possible, with regard to what legislative action might be advisable and could be taken by either the Government of Canada or the Government of British Columbia, or by both, within their respective fields of jurisdiction.

I am advised that this committee should make its report shortly. I am also advised that the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission does not wish to bring forth its final report until the intergovernmental committee has made known its recommendations and until any legislative action thereby recommended may be brought into effect.

By the end of this year the moratorium in effect now will have expired. Therefore, honourable senators, there is a degree of urgency to this piece of legislation.

I might say from briefly perusing Senate *Hansard* relative to debates in this chamber on previous occasions, and on preceding bills correlative to this one, the honourable Senator Roebuck, with his usual scholastic perfection and refined sense of legalistic drafting and principles, has taken exception to this piece of legislation.

I also noted that initially when the first measure was introduced, he referred to it as being unprecedented. I think that is about the only point he raised about the first bill that he could not raise against this present legislation.

Honourable senators, because of the shortness of the bill itself, being limited to the expiry of the exemption, if this bill receives second reading today I would ask that it be given third reading as well.

Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck: Honourable senators, my friend Senator Lang has referred to the objections which I took to this legislation when it came before us previously. The assurance that I was given on that occasion was that there was a crisis of some kind in British Columbia, and that during the interval of the exemption of these people from the Criminal Code and the Combines Investigation Act, the matter would be worked out in some way, and we would not be asked to extend the legislation further.

I could not have protested more strongly than I did at that time, within my own ability to protest. I protest still more vigor-

ously now against this kind of legislation. The Criminal Code and the Combines Investigation Act were passed for the purpose of protecting the public against undue restrictions on competition. The game that is going on in British Columbia today in the fishing industry is for the purpose of excluding competition in this particular industry. The very purpose of the bill is to allow them to do something that we will not allow other people to do in any part of Canada.

The Criminal Code, a carefully revised, thought-out statute of many years standing, is for the purpose of protecting the public. The Combines Investigation Act is not nearly so old, but it was designed for the same purpose.

The idea of allowing people in British Columbia to violate the provisions of those two acts because someone suggests a strike, is ridiculous. Let them strike. The fishermen there are not employers; they work on their own and they combine with the packers in order to boost prices. The purpose of this legislation is to allow them to do so. It is outrageous, from my point of view. To bring this measure to us now and expect us to pass it, one, two, three, and go, is equally outrageous. I am not in favour of passing it now. I am not consenting to anything of the kind.

I would like to see this act referred to the Banking and Commerce Committee when we come together again, in order that we may have time to consider it, to actually see the parties who are seeking this exemption from the Criminal Code and to hear what they have to say. In that way, we could at least give ourselves an opportunity to exercise a proper, decent judgment.

The fact that the exemption expires on December 31 only places these people in the same position as all other businessmen, producers, manufacturers and traders, all over the Dominion of Canada. I see no reason for exempting them, or to continue to exempt them year after year. First, it was a crisis. Now it is another crisis. It was a crisis in 1959; it was a crisis again in 1960, in 1961 and 1962; and now, in 1964, it is still another crisis. It is a ridiculous situation, and I oppose it with all the strength that I command. I will take no responsibility in connection with it.

Hon. John M. Macdonald: Honourable senators, the only reason I rise to make a few comments on this bill is that I feel a certain degree of sympathy for the sponsor, for it was my lot, either the last time or the previous time this was extended, to have to explain to the Senate why we were asking for passage of such legislation.