

encourage scientists and men of learning to go to that area and locate there so they may conduct proper investigations? Is that the best location for that plant, in your estimation?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I suppose the hon. gentleman would expect me to say that my constituency is so remote it is not a nice place to go, but I do not agree with him. There is no place in Canada that I would rather be than in Bonavista-Twillingate, any part of it.

**An hon. Member:** What about Ottawa?

**Mr. Nowlan:** You will soon have a chance to prove that statement.

**The Chairman:** Order. It being one o'clock I do now leave the chair.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

#### AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Chairman, when the committee rose at one o'clock I was making some observations about the experimental salt fish plant at Valleyfield in Newfoundland, and I had been asked by the hon. member for Queens-Lunenburg if I thought that this was a suitable location for such a plant. I replied that I was sure the hon. member would not expect me to say that it was not a suitable place, any more than I would expect him to say that anything situated in his constituency was not suitably situated. I am sure that persons other than myself and other residents of my constituency might think that that is not a conclusive answer and therefore, sir, I shall try to give an answer that is more objective in character.

The purpose of the plant at Valleyfield which I know a good deal about because I was a member of the government when it was decided to build it, is not, as the hon. member for Queens-Lunenburg implied, to compete in the commercial field. The purpose of this plant is to experiment with new ways of curing and processing codfish, with packaging and with preparing it for market in the hope that we can expand the total Canadian market for fish. The reason it was put in Newfoundland is, I am sure, quite obvious to the hon. member. Newfoundland is the biggest producer of codfish in Canada; it produces a lot of the codfish that is processed in the hon. member's own constituency, as he knows, since the late government changed the regulations to permit the processors in Nova Scotia to buy salt bulk fish in Newfoundland. This

has been mutually beneficial to both provinces and it did seem to the government of the day—I am sure the Minister of Fisheries would agree with this view—that the right place for an experimental station of this sort is where the fish are. The essence of dealing with fish, as I do not need to tell the hon. gentleman who has probably had a much closer association with fish over the years than I have had, is to keep it as fresh as possible and to do the processing as soon after they are caught as possible.

It is true that, at the time this plant was established at Valleyfield, the north side of Bonavista bay was relatively inaccessible because of the lack of roads. But I am happy to say the provincial government is doing a good deal to improve that situation, and by the end of next season, if all goes well, there will be a road into Valleyfield. Of course, the whole road development program in Newfoundland would be speeded up if this government would only make up its mind to get ahead with the grants to the Atlantic provinces that they talk about, and if they would make them available for the current fiscal year.

I do want to make a suggestion to the Minister of Fisheries which I have made previously to people in the trade but which perhaps is rather difficult for those in the trade to carry out, since most of them have not very much excess capital. We should try to tap a new home market for salt fish. It so happens that during the three years that I was minister of citizenship and immigration about 75,000 Italians came to this country to settle. That is about the same rate at which the settlement had been for some years before that. These people in their own country have been consumers of Newfoundland salt codfish, Canadian salt codfish, over the years, and it does seem to me that most of them live in a relatively densely populated area, in Toronto, Montreal, the Niagara peninsula and in Hamilton. They have a press of their own which has a wide circulation. It did seem to me that here was a real opportunity for an experiment with a concentrated potential market to try to see whether we could not create right here at home a bigger market than we now have for salt fish. I know everyone appreciates how important it is to have the widest possible diversity of markets, and I would commend this suggestion to the minister as one that it might be worth while to follow up.

I have one or two specific things that I should like to refer to in the course of the discussion of the minister's estimates but I feel I have taken up sufficient time of the committee now and I shall take my seat.