

Supply—Fisheries

valley. He said at that time that he understood that a copy of the resolution had been, or was being, sent to the minister.

The opponents of the draggers also claim that they break up the herring and haddock schools. Then they bring up the matter of the twelve-mile limit for large Canadian trawlers, and the three-mile limit for all other trawlers.

On the other side of the picture those who are in favour of the use of draggers claim that if it were not for their use there would not be the great increase in volume there has been in recent years. They claim that in order to have continuity of supply we must have the draggers. They say that those who are in the fish business cannot wire their wholesalers or retailers a day in advance and say, "We are sorry, but the weather is bad and there will be no fishing boats out today. Therefore there will be no fish."

In other words their argument is that to have continuity of supply we must have the draggers which can fish in much heavier weather than the small boats. They state that it was only two years ago when the fishermen in the St. Mary's bay area were opposed to the use of draggers for flounders; yet today that opposition has almost completely disappeared.

Indeed, I have here another resolution contained in a wire which reached me only a few days ago stating that the trawl and gear fishermen of the St. Mary's bay area had made a request that dragger fishing be stopped, and then they qualified it by limiting it to haddock dragging, thus approving the practice in connection with flounders.

Those who are in favour of the draggers say that the proportion of small fish caught and thrown back is very low, varying between five and fifteen per cent, depending on conditions. They admit that the dragging brings forth rocks—and we know that it does, but they say there is no proof that this is damaging the fishing grounds, and suggest that the use of the dragger may have the same effect on the fishing grounds as do the plow and the harrow in agriculture.

They claim that set gear is not damaged, or if so only on rare occasions, because, under the terms of the licence granted, a dragger cannot go within half a mile of fixed gear, or of a boat using handlines.

Of course all this brings up a great many questions. In going through my constituency—and, as the minister knows, the chief industry of southwestern Nova Scotia is fishing; the production of fish in the counties of Yarmouth and Digby stands fourth and fifth

respectively in Nova Scotia—one of the first questions which comes up is this: Is the twelve-mile limit fair? It is my understanding that the twelve mile limit is a Canadian law applying to large Canadian trawlers, and that under section 56 of our Fisheries Act they are not allowed to come within twelve miles of the shore. By the same token, draggers can come in from other countries and fish up to within three miles of our shores. I understand that the idea of section 56 when it was first promulgated was that it would provide protection for our own inshore fishing industry and would conserve our fishing grounds. Yet what we are doing today is reserving the area from the three mile to the twelve mile limit for draggers of countries other than Canada.

I am told by the fishermen that only a few years ago Norway endeavoured to set up a four mile limit, but this was opposed by the British government and brought before the international court at The Hague. In view of the problems that are being brought to my attention by those in the fishing industry and in view of the divergent points of view that exist I should like to ask the minister some questions which I should appreciate his answering before his estimates are finished.

In connection with the fishing limits, I should like to know whether the twelve mile limit is purely Canadian in nature, and whether draggers from other countries are allowed to fish within three miles of our shores. Is the trend toward the use of draggers and trawlers universal in so far as fishing countries are concerned? What is being done in other countries in order to protect inshore fishing grounds?

What results have been obtained by the biological research board concerning investigations as to the number of fish caught and thrown back and as to whether or not the fishing grounds are being depleted. Has there been an increase in the volume of the catch, and can that increase be credited to the use of draggers and trawlers? Is the department watching closely the situation as it affects these two large groups which have opposing points of view?

I realize, as do all the fishermen of southwestern Nova Scotia, that this is an extremely difficult situation, not only from the economic but from the social point of view. There are hundreds of fishermen who own small power boats and have \$2,000, \$3,000 or \$4,000 tied up in boats, engines and gear. I realize that the problem is complicated further by the fact that out of 62 licences for trawlers and draggers granted in Nova