

Mr. SMITH: We would find ourselves without a market for 50 to 55 per cent of our fish production, and we would really be in very serious trouble. What steps could be taken by the Government of Canada I do not know. It is a subject, I may say, which has us all very much worried at the present time. Recent moves have struck great fear in our hearts as to what may happen to our United States market.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL: Is their own production sufficient to meet their needs?

Mr. SMITH: No, it is not.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL: Perhaps that would be a reason why they would not impose too heavy a restriction on your products.

Mr. SMITH: The consumption of fillets in the United States last year was something like 230 million pounds. The imports of fillets from all countries to the United States was in the vicinity of 107 million pounds, of which Canada's share was about 48 million, not quite half. What has caused this situation to arise in the United States is a glutting of the market. There are more fillets in there than the market can absorb, and consequently things are not in a good state. That has brought about the agitation for quotas or restrictions of some sort on the import of fillets into the United States.

Hon. Mr. HORNER: An important factor as far as the United States is concerned is the present plentiful supply of beef. When the price of beef was high you had an advantage in the fishing industry, but now they have plenty of beef, pork and chicken. Incidentally, what hope is there with respect to the South American countries?

Mr. SMITH: Well, the trouble there is you run into currency restrictions and the distributing set-up in those countries is not capable of handling fish products. They do not have the proper refrigeration facilities, and besides that the fish produced in this country come from a high-cost area and I guess they just cannot afford to buy it.

Hon. Mr. CRERAR: I would like to ask Mr. Smith a question arising, I may say, out of my profound ignorance of the whole problem. You spoke of frozen fish. Can the quality of fish that is taken from the water be maintained by quick freezing and keeping it frozen until it reaches the consumer? I know that we are able to buy fish in Winnipeg in nice cellophane covered packages. Can the quality of the fish be maintained for any length of time or does it deteriorate?

Mr. SMITH: Senator Crerar, it does deteriorate with time. It can be maintained up to a certain period. There is a great argument as to what that period might be: somewhere in the vicinity of six to eight months after it has been caught, provided it is strictly fresh on being originally frozen, and kept under proper temperatures all that time.

Hon. Mr. CRERAR: If that is done at the time the fish is taken out of the water, say on the Atlantic Coast, and shipped to Winnipeg and consumed there within two weeks, will the quality be maintained?

Mr. SMITH: Oh yes, I think so.

Hon. Mr. HORNER: I think Senator Crerar has eaten fresh white fish and frozen white fish, and can make a comparison himself. I have eaten fish taken out of a lake in forty below zero weather. This fish was frozen right away and was kept in that state until it reached our camp where it was eaten. I recall at the same time catching another fresh whitefish which I took great pains to protect from freezing. The frozen fish and the unfrozen fish were eaten at the camp, and there is no doubt that the fresh unfrozen fish tasted better. It is much superior.