

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
Room 301,

MONDAY, February 21, 1916.

Consideration of the resolution of the House of Commons directing an inquiry to be made to determine, if possible, the cause, or causes, of the great discrepancy between the price of fish at the places of production and that charged on the interior markets of Canada, was taken up this morning at 11 o'clock a.m. by the Select Standing Committee on Marine and Fisheries, to whom it was referred. Mr. Clarence Jameson, Chairman of the Committee, presided.

THE CHAIRMAN: I propose first to place the resolution which is the subject of this Inquiry on the record and follow it with a brief statement:

"That, whereas fish is a highly nutritious and palatable article of food, of which abundant supplies are continually available at low prices at the sea-coast and inland waters of Canada; and, whereas in order that an increased demand for fish might be speedily developed in the interior markets of the country by having the same placed thereon in prime condition and at moderate prices, the Government has been and is assisting the industry, under certain conditions, by paying a portion of the express charges and providing more adequate transportation facilities; notwithstanding which, the prices at which fish can be purchased in such interior markets seems unreasonably high, as compared with those received by the producer, which condition is militating against the ends in view.

"Therefore, be it resolved that, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that an Inquiry should be made to determine if possible the cause or causes of the great discrepancy between the price of fish at the places of production and that charged on the interior markets.

"And it is further resolved that this resolution be referred to the Committee on Marine and Fisheries, with instructions to consider the subject matter thereof and make such inquiry."

For the purpose of prefacing the evidence which we are to take, and as the mover of this resolution, let me say, I think it is possible to increase very greatly the consumption of sea food in Canada, giving to inland consumers fish in prime condition, at prices much below those now paid for an inferior article. The combined and harmonious effort of shippers, wholesalers, retailers, and transportation companies is necessary to this end. Their co-operation can so highly organize the system of distribution, I believe, as to effect a great reduction in the spread in price:

1. By effecting a short-cut between producer and consumer:
2. By well-organized economy in distribution:

Abnormal conditions, caused by the war, have resulted in prices at the seaboard being, I understand, higher than ever before. Those of us from the coast are glad to know the fisherman is getting a good return for his harvest of the seas. In this, I believe we reflect the feeling of the consumer. But the consumer has rights, which should not longer be ignored, and those rights demand that there shall be no excessive or needless cost, or loss of time, in distribution.

Therefore the dealers and transportation companies owe it to the people of this country to place the distribution of sea-foods upon a proper basis.

In such an inquiry as the present, the evidence, to be useful, will necessarily require to be largely that of experts in the various lines. It is desired also to keep the record within as small a compass as possible, so that it may be easily available. The