

feeding his staff was almost non-existent, because they would have their homes there. There was no question of getting an under- or over-supply of labour; ample was available. And while the transport of the fish cost a little more, by putting on fast boats with Diesel engines that can be run on fuel oil at a very cheap rate, it was found more profitable to have the cannery at a centre of population than to have it away off in a remote place. Consequently these canneries have grown up. If this order in council goes into effect and operates as I think it will, these canners will just be out of luck because they will not be within twenty-four hours run from where the fish are caught.

As I have said, these attempts to get this legislation put through were not confined to a day, but continued through a series of years. For a number of years the obvious injustice of some of these things I have mentioned prevented them being put into effect. It did until last year, in fact up to this year. Just recently—I mentioned it in the letter I wrote to the department on the 10th of January—I heard a whisper in Vancouver that an attempt was going to be made to put it over this department along the lines of processing in area and preventing the fish from being canned unless they had been delivered at the wharf within twenty-four hours of being caught. The processing in area has failed for the moment—I anticipate it is only for the moment—but they did put it over as regards time limit within which the fish had to be delivered to the wharf. They have slipped it in under cover of this order in council as an amendment to the inspection regulations. If they get by with it this year, it will be a very apparent handwriting on the wall indicating that we will find the idea of processing in area introduced next year, and then heaven help the independent canners and all the money they have spent, and still more the independent fishermen, who will be reduced to a condition of servitude. That, I claim, is the real objective of this order in council, and I defy anyone to convince me otherwise. That is why the demand for the order in council came not from the purchasers. It came not from the inspectors, to whom it must be a nuisance and an interference with their work and a reflection on their ability if not their integrity. It did not come from the departmental officials, at any rate up to two weeks before the order in council was passed they said they were satisfied. But it came from those who in the language of the department control ninety per cent of the fish canned, but not ninety per cent of the canneries. It came

from the men whose goods were subject to inspection; apparently their views on the method of inspecting their product had weight with the department. One would think that those were the last people to whose opinion consideration should be given as to what was the best way of controlling the inspection of their stock. The undoubted result will be, as I have said, to eliminate the smaller and newer canneries in Vancouver and elsewhere, and worst of all to eliminate competition in the buying of fish, because the fishermen must sell to the local cannery. I have heard it said: "Oh, there will be competition, because there will be two canners in a given area." But how long will it take two canners to get together? I have been in business and I know how readily that would be arranged. So it would make it impossible for them to have competition in price. Hitherto, if the local canner does not or cannot or will not give a reasonable price, the fishermen could send their fish away to another canner, or they could invite a packer, that is a boat that carries fish on contract, to come into their neighbourhood. I am not suggesting, I do not want to be thought of as suggesting, that the canners are full of nothing but malice and ill will, and want to injure the fishermen. Not at all; there are many fine canners who realize that the best interests of both are served by getting the fishermen and the canners together. I have heard many canners say that they think the best ultimate condition will be when the fishermen do nothing but fish and the canners nothing but can. I say it is not always the fault of the local canners that they cannot give a sufficient price to the fishermen. It may be due to accident; it may be that the canner did not lay in enough cans, that he did not have a cannery of sufficient size, or maybe he had put up enough for all the orders he had and did not care to or could not go any further, or maybe he had exhausted his financial backing. All or any of these reasons might suffice. It does not mean at all that these men are necessarily trying to work an injustice or hardship on the fishermen because they offer him a price he could not accept. I want to quote a canneryman on this point:

Taking these facts into consideration we can only assume, subject of course to correction, that this regulation was passed to assist certain powerful canning interests who have canneries situated on the fishing grounds and who wish to embarrass others not similarly situated who rely upon collecting boats for their fish. Our experience has been that canners sending out collecting boats, properly iced, pack a better grade of fish as a whole than those situated on the fishing grounds since in the majority of cases the latter have no ice available and not having far to run do not take the same care of the fish.