

Supply—Fisheries

prospects for an increase in the markets for eastern Canadian production of fish, especially Nova Scotia, an increase in the volume of fish that can be sold in Canada or elsewhere, in the year 1951 as compared with say the last two years?

Mr. Mayhew: A little while ago I said that I did not think the minister should be making long speeches. Probably I had better say something generally on this subject. For the year 1950 there has been a general increase in volume, poundage, and dollars all the way across Canada, with the exception of Newfoundland, and there we have the difficulty of marketing to which I will refer later. But the volume both in quantity and dollars is only one indication. In volume this year we are crowding two billion pounds. In dollars we are crowding two hundred million for the industry. I am satisfied that in the year we are approaching, that is, 1951, both these records will be broken. That is certainly the indication at the present time.

In addition to that there is the more substantial measurement: the per capita consumption of fish in Canada has increased approximately one pound in the last year. I think that is more significant than the figures I have quoted to the committee. In my opinion we have not by any means reached the volume that we should be eating in Canada, but nevertheless it is a substantial increase. But what is even more encouraging is the fact that the retail merchants all across Canada are taking a greater interest in their own establishments. They are installing better freezing equipment and building better fish stores. They are putting in tile floors and are making their stores as attractive as you would a dairy. We should like to see more of that kind of fish store in Canada. There is no reason why anyone in Ottawa, or in fact anywhere else in Canada today, cannot get fresh fish of good quality. There are still a few stores which have not been modernized, and which at times may have some carry-over. But from all these directions there is clear indication of encouragement.

Perhaps it would be sufficient to say that, so far as Newfoundland is concerned, there has been a great improvement. A greater variety of fish is being sold. More people are turning to the frozen fish fillets and to fresh fish. Then, a large quantity has gone to the driers to which I referred. We hope to give greater encouragement to salmon and lobster fishing, and I believe that in a very short time Newfoundland will have a tidy and well-balanced fishing industry,

in fact just as satisfactory a fishing industry as will be found in any other of the Canadian provinces. This is coming about, not gradually but rapidly, if one may judge by the number of people who are entering the fresh and frozen fish business.

I am not one who believes that the salt fish industry is ruled out of the picture. I believe we have to apply new methods to the marketing of salt fish; we have to have new techniques and have the fish put up in different ways. I believe that with this commodity we can give the working people of Canada and the United States the best possible value. We can give them the best possible breakfast with the smallest cash outlay, if I may put it that way. We have not convinced the people of that, up to this point, but I believe it will be done. I do not think I will see it, but perhaps it will come about in three or four years. I do not expect I will be here that long. However, someone will do it, and I am sure it will be carried on successfully.

Mr. Black (Cumberland): Mr. Chairman, I know all members are pleased with the encouraging report given by the minister. This is true particularly of those hon. members representing Nova Scotia and Newfoundland constituencies. I do not believe there ever was a time in our history when there was a greater scope for encouraging the production and marketing of fish. This arises from the very high cost of competing meat foods. I was informed this week that beef was selling at \$37 a hundredweight on the hoof. The prices of fish to the fishermen have been notoriously low over the years—too low, I would say.

What has been the relative value obtained by the fishermen of Nova Scotia over the last few years? Satisfactory returns, above everything else, will encourage the fishermen to produce. There is an unlimited scope for increasing the market throughout Canada and also in the United States, if proper encouragement is given by the department to the supplying of fish in central Canada and American points, in proper condition. In the last two or three years what amount per pound has been received by the fishermen of Nova Scotia?

Mr. Mayhew: I am afraid we cannot answer the question as the hon. member would like to have it. However, there has been no falling off in prices of Nova Scotia fish. As a matter of fact the prices have been more stable in that province than anywhere in Canada.

With regard to production in Nova Scotia, I would say that in 1949 it amounted to 354,650,000 pounds, with a value of \$17,951,130, while in 1950 there were 359,628,000 pounds,