

Supply—Fisheries

Mr. Chairman, there remain several matters which have not been mentioned in the committee today but which have been drawn to my attention, possibly only because the constituents whom I have the honour to represent live along the Fraser river. One of these questions has to do with the equalization of the time allotted for catching fish. The gillnet association members have a particular complaint in this respect. They complain of the fact that the fishermen in the Johnston straits area who are permitted to fish five days a week with seiners, are being treated much more fairly than the corresponding fishermen on the Fraser river who are only permitted to catch fish during two days of the week. The reason for their complaint is well founded. They say it is exactly the same run of fish which is in question, the same fish comes up the Fraser river as passes through the straits and, therefore, they think they should be given the right to fish for as many days as the fishermen in the seine vessels. There is a certain feeling that a particular group is being favoured, and they do not think this should be the case.

It is a grave problem this year, particularly in view of the fact that the Minister of Labour announced that there were some 698,000 unemployed as of December 26. While he did mention the fishermen, I would say that a good many of those he mentioned are undoubtedly from the Fraser valley and they cannot qualify because they do not have a sufficient number of weeks devoted to fishing to qualify them for unemployment insurance benefits under the regulations.

Another question that has disturbed this group of fishermen is the division of time which is proposed under the regulations dated December 5, 1957. The first of these regulations reads as follows:

That a split fishing day for salmon purse seines and salmon gill nets be established in area 6 (Butedale) area 7 (Bella Bella) and area 8 (Bella Coola-Namu), whereby during each fishing week salmon purse seines would operate from 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. daily, and salmon gill nets from 6.00 p.m. each day to 6.00 a.m. of the day following; provided that the opening day (Sunday) of each week would be exempted from this arrangement; also it would not quite apply to Burke Channel above Kwatna, nor to Dean Channel above Edward Point.

I realize, Mr. Chairman, that this does not relate exclusively to my own riding but it does concern fishermen. The regulation continues:

It is represented that such arrangement would aid in the ever-increasing problem of conservation of salmon runs in these particular areas; also that separation of the two types of gear would assist in orderly and effective operations by each and would be generally advantageous.

[Mr. Hahn.]

Then there is this particular note:

Note: If there appeared to be doubt that such a regulation could be applied successfully to the whole of each area, there is the alternative suggestion that the proposal be implemented on a trial basis for the 1958 season by confining its application to particular waters of the three areas, i.e. Whale Channel, Matheson Channel-Kynoch Inlet, Seaforth Channel, Fisher Channel-Fitzhugh Sound.

The observation made by the gillnet fishermen in this respect is that the time allotment is completely in reverse of what they think it should be. The fishermen cannot gill at night and if this proposal is put into effect the seiners would have the full advantage of getting the bulk of the fish.

The hon. member for the Fraser Valley raised the question of the ownership of the Japanese fleet. I asked the former administration about deep-sea fishing and the former minister of fisheries, the hon. member for Coast-Capilano, as recorded at page 1711 of *Hansard* of February 27, 1957, had this to say:

It may be that there is some slight mingling in the centre of the ocean—it is a very big ocean—between the salmon which have left the Siberian streams and the salmon which have left our British Columbian and Alaskan streams.

These hon. members who were here might recall that at that time I raised the question as to whether Japanese fishermen were catching salmon which might have spawned in the Fraser river or upstream from the Fraser and had gone out to sea and were being caught by Japanese and other fishermen. In his reply which I read a moment ago the minister said that there was perhaps some slight mingling in the middle of the ocean but he went on to say:

As far as the pink salmon is concerned it is highly unlikely, because they are only a small five-pound fish at maturity and they cannot go that far. The sockeye are out there for four years and the springs may be there for five years, so it is possible that the big ones may get that far. Some of the Siberian fish may turn up over here and some of our fish over there.

The question I would raise, Mr. Chairman—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Hahn: We have suddenly been plunged into darkness, Mr. Chairman, because the lights have all gone out.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North): The *Hansard* reporter will be unable to continue in the dark.

Mr. Hahn: Mr. Chairman, do you wish me to continue or shall I wait for a few minutes to see if the lights come on again.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Rea): If the hon. member wishes he could take his seat for a moment until we see if the power failure can be corrected.