

*Supply—Fisheries*

so that fishermen can obtain some compensation for the loss of gear and boats due to the ravages of storms which in the past have caused great distress.

However, there is one other aspect of the insurance scheme which I would like to bring to the attention of the minister. I have no doubt he and the Minister of Labour already have this matter in mind. I refer to unemployment insurance and I would like to emphasize that this is one thing fishermen lack. During autumn when fishing comes to an end and the fishermen have to hang up their nets they are unemployed and have no claims for unemployment insurance. I believe though that this matter will receive the minister's full attention and I have every confidence that in time something will be worked out to assist our fishermen.

In Newfoundland we had in the past three different kinds of fishing. We had inshore fisheries which were carried on by shoremen; then we had bank and deep-sea fisheries carried on by the men who sailed the bankers. Then we had the Labrador fishery which was operated by shoremen who went to Labrador and also by floaters. Unfortunately since confederation we have seen a great decline in some of these fisheries, particularly in the bank fishery and most particularly in the Labrador fishery.

The shore fishery is dependent upon the winds and the tides. We know, of course, that fish must eat and that they have to go in search of food. Sometimes it happens that the winds are onshore winds. Just at the moment, on the northeast coast I believe there is quite a blockade of ice on account of the prevailing northeast winds that are operating down there at the present time. The fish, of course, have to depend on the winds, the tides and the currents. Generally speaking, when you have a lot of inwind it brings in food upon which these fish feed, thrive and grow. Then we get a good inshore fishery.

But sometimes when the winds are offshore the food on which these fish exist is taken far out into the deep water. Then these fish, of course, have to go out into the deeper water. Then there is not so much profit, return or proceeds from the catch because the fishermen have the toil of hauling their nets, and oftentimes they do not take many fish. Thus the necessity for going out after these fish is today more evident than it has ever been in the past. We realize that it has been necessary for fishermen to get long-liners, draggers and other vessels which go out and get the fish from the fishing banks.

In the past I think Newfoundland has suffered from the fact that too little capital has been available for investment in the fisheries. Today we realize that more fish plants are necessary. There is a need for modern fresh fish plants which will take the fish from the fishermen as they come in, split them, freeze them and get them ready for the most productive market, or in other words the market which would produce the largest number of dollars for our fishermen. To us, of course, that is the great United States market.

There was a time when Newfoundland was producing over a million quintals of codfish, most of which was salted. Today, however, we realize that many of our customers who used to buy our fish are producing their own. That has been especially so since the war. Of course, during the war there was little difficulty in disposing of fish. The greatest problem in those days was transportation. It was easy then to sell fish, provided the transportation was available. We now see that these people who used to buy our fish in days gone by are, as I said before, producing their own. They come to the Grand Banks and look for fish. The result is that we are not able to sell such a large quantity of fish as used to be sold in days gone by.

As far as the Labrador fishery is concerned, I think something special will have to be done. This is not the first time that I have brought to the attention of the minister of fisheries—not the present minister but his immediate predecessor—the need for something being done for the Labrador fisheries. There is a long section of the Labrador coast line where there is an abundant fishery. In fact, as to the fishery around the island of Belle Isle—a large producing area—I understand that at one time in Paris, France, berths for Belle Isle were drawn. That fact shows that in those days when the French were fishing on the French shore—the treaty coast, as we call it even today—there was an abundance of fish around this section. It is still a large-producing section. We realize that those who go there in schooners have gone to great expense in providing themselves with vessels and gear, and that they get an abundant harvest of fish. But the market for the Labrador fish is not what it used to be. Costs of twine, netting and other equipment have gone up to such an extent that there is not much money in fishing. The result is that many people have given up fishing on the Labrador.