

Supply—Fisheries

March 19 select lobsters were 80 cents a pound, and the chickens were 55 cents a pound. On April 23 selects were 75 cents a pound and chickens were 50 cents a pound. On April 2 select lobsters were 80 cents a pound and chickens were 55 cents a pound.

The market in the United States today demands a larger lobster than we are producing. I realize that in areas of the maritime provinces where lobsters are canned there may be some argument in favour of a smaller sized lobster, but I do believe that if you made a survey in the bay of Fundy area today you would find the fishermen very much convinced that the size limit of lobsters should be increased. I base that argument on the fact that a lobster that weighs a pound this season, worth 35 cents, if left in the water a year and permitted to shed its shell another year, would increase in weight to a pound and a quarter or larger and would increase in value by 50 per cent. In my opinion that is a very fine investment, and I would suggest to the minister and the officials of his department that they could get the information with very little trouble through their inspectors in the various sections where the lobster industry is carried on, to determine whether in the opinion of the fishermen there should be an increase in the size of lobsters.

I want to emphasize once more that the United States market demands a two or two and one-half pound lobster, and more than half of the lobsters we are producing are of the one pound or one and one-half pound size.

Mr. Mayhew: What the hon. member is saying is correct in theory, I think. It is a very controversial subject and one that would be very difficult to administer. We are having great difficulty now in getting the fishermen to catch only the size limit; we would have great difficulty if we increased it another two inches. Our difficulties would multiply.

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): Does the minister find that difficulty in the bay of Fundy area?

Mr. Mayhew: I would not like to single out any. The only way I know of doing it would be to take a sort of Gallup poll in the district. We could investigate it in that way.

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): The minister has referred to the idea of having a Gallup poll. I realize that in years gone by the Department of Fisheries has obtained information through inspectors in different sections of the maritime provinces. Those inspectors get in touch with individual fishermen. They make reports, and those reports would come to Ottawa. Decisions could be based upon them.

[Mr. Stuart (Charlotte).]

Mr. McLure: Last year there was considerable talk about the building of a fish plant at Hunter River in Queens county. Evidently, after all the advance propaganda in connection with it, this matter died out. I understand now that a promise has been made to Prince Edward Island that a fresh fish processing plant is to be erected in the fall. I have here a letter from the board of trade of Souris, Prince Edward Island, stating that their town is better situated than any other for this fresh fish processing plant. Is the department going to build that plant in the province?

Mr. Mayhew: The department does not build plants anywhere; that is left to private industry. The industrial development bank has helped fishing companies, but not the department, to build such plants. I understand that at the present time one is contemplated at Souris, Prince Edward Island. However, that would probably be financed with the aid of the industrial bank.

Mr. McLure: How much financial support would they receive?

Mr. Mayhew: I cannot answer that; the directors of the industrial development bank would have to answer it. The company would make application to the industrial development bank, and it would be done having regard to the value of the plant. I cannot say offhand what it would be.

Mr. McLure: Would they not have to have the recommendation of the Department of Fisheries before they could go to the industrial development bank?

Mr. Mayhew: Not at all.

Mr. McLure: They would apply as a private concern?

Mr. Mayhew: Yes.

Item agreed to.

Mr. Higgins: Mr. Chairman, items 150 and 151, I suggest, might be considered together, because they both deal with the same subject matter.

The Deputy Chairman: Is it the wish of the committee to consider items 150 and 151 together?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Field services—Inspection branch—

150. Construction or acquisition of buildings, works, land and new equipment, \$114,475.

Fish culture and development branch—

151. Operation and maintenance, \$693,844.

Mr. Mayhew: This is one of the services of which we are particularly proud at the present time. It has to do with the streams service,