

*Fishing Industry—Beam Trawlers*

Hon. J. E. MICHAUD (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, much has been said this afternoon about the steam trawler, and I am sure the discussion we have heard will bring back fond memories to many of the older members. This question has been debated on many occasions, and the same arguments have been advanced from different sides of the house. The last two memorable occasions upon which it was debated were in 1929 and 1930. Before 1929, steam trawlers were permitted to operate off the shores of Canada without too much restriction or regimentation, but at that time parliament thought it advisable to regulate trawlers.

For those who are not familiar with fishing terms—and I am sure there are some in this house—may I say that three methods of fishing are used by those who fish on the Atlantic coast for what is known as ground fish, that is cod, haddock and whitefish generally. First, there is the old method of hook and line which has been in use for the last 300 years. Men go off the shore in small boats with a hook and line and try to catch the cod with bait. As soon as they have sufficient fish in their boats, they come to shore to dispose of them as best they can.

Then, there is the more modern method of using the Lunenburg schooner. This type of schooner is called the Lunenburg schooner because the first schooners were built at that port. The fishing is not done from the schooner proper. The schooner is a large boat propelled by a diesel engine. It goes to the grand banks or off the shore and stays several days, generally being manned by a crew of about twenty-five men. Each of these schooners has ten or twelve dories, small wooden boats, which are lowered to the sea when the schooner is out on the high seas, and from which two fishermen fish with hook and line. The success of their catch depends upon the weather and other conditions; when the dory is full, it returns to the schooner, its fish is put into the schooner's stores, and finally the schooner brings its whole catch back to port.

But there is another method which has been described as the trawler method. The trawlers are large boats of the mine sweeper type. As a matter of fact, during the war all our steam trawlers were used as mine sweepers. They are operated by steam, and the fishing is done mechanically. The trawler fishes with a bag which is dragged along the bottom of the sea; when full, the bag is raised with a mechanical derrick and the fish are dumped on to the deck of the trawler. The operation is very similar to the operation of purse seiners

on the west coast. It is obvious to those who have seen either the purse seiners on the west coast or the trawlers on the east, that the trawler method enables the operators to catch a large quantity of fish in a relatively short time, and the fish are not kept lying exposed for a long time to sun and weather. That helps to preserve the quality of the fish when it is offered to the consumer.

Trawling is not a new method of fishing; it has been in operation in the old world for many, many years. It was only in 1908 that a company in Nova Scotia decided to try to develop a fresh fish business in Canada by the trawler method. The records of the department show that before the year 1908 there was hardly any fresh fish, unfrozen, sold in Canada, and the very little quantity that was sold on the Toronto and Montreal markets was imported overnight from Boston, or Portland, Maine, and then distributed and consumed. Thirty years ago most of the fish consumed in Canada was dried, salted, pickled or processed fish. But these people had vision and decided to try to capture whatever market there was in this country for fresh fish, and to expand that market if possible.

The department, working in cooperation with these people, approached the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian National express to secure transportation facilities for the delivery of fresh fish from the Atlantic coast to inland markets. When it is realized that the nearest market of any importance to the Atlantic coast is about fifteen hundred miles from the source of production, one appreciates the difficulties of transporting fresh caught fish and keeping it fresh until it is distributed to the consumers in Toronto and Montreal. But that is something which the trade has been able to accomplish in this country. Canada is now recognized as having the best transportation and distribution facilities of any country in the world for marketing fresh fish far from the source of production. The national railways, in cooperation with the government and the industry, helped to develop markets in the large consuming centres, with the result that from 1925 to 1927 there were about twelve trawlers operating from the coast of Nova Scotia to supply the needs of this expanding market.

After the war, people on the Atlantic coast went into fishing more extensively than before, and a far greater number were engaged in the industry. There was a good market in the United States and the fishing industry on the Atlantic coast expanded. In the winter

[Mr. Deachman.]