

Supply—Fisheries

monopoly of the export of salt fish. This company is under the control of the Newfoundland fisheries board, under an act of the commission of government—which I happen to have in my hand, by pure accident, at this very moment. So that there is indirect supervision now by the federal government through the Newfoundland fisheries board over these transactions. But these are deficiency payments direct to the fishermen, after the transactions were completed.

Mr. Brooks: Does it apply only to Newfoundland?

Mr. Pickersgill: No, there are other areas to which floor prices legislation applies.

Mr. Argue: Is there anything to prevent applying this type of legislation to the fishing industry in other provinces, or is there some special reason why it is applied only to Newfoundland?

Mr. Pickersgill: The Fisheries Prices Support Act applies to all the fisheries of all the provinces. But the way it was used in Newfoundland was to make deficiency payments after the transactions for the year had been completed. There has been fisheries prices support given in nearly every province, including that of the hon. member who has asked the question.

Mr. Argue: I should like to have this cleared up. Is it possible legally that the technique used in connection with Newfoundland fish could be used in connection with fish from other provinces?

Mr. Pickersgill: For the sale of them?

Mr. Argue: Yes.

Mr. Pickersgill: That is a hypothetical question. I do not think I can answer it.

Mr. Abbott: I cannot, either.

Mr. Noseworthy: Would the Secretary of State tell us to what extent the fishermen themselves benefit from the federal subsidy, and to what extent the benefits are received by the merchants selling the fish.

Mr. Pickersgill: This relates to something that happened two years ago: it is just to balance up the books. I understand these deficiency payments were made to the fishermen, and to the fishermen only—and made direct to the fishermen.

Mr. Stick: That is correct.

Item agreed to.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

570. Combines Investigation Act—office for investigation and research—further amount required, \$65,000.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain): I believe that today we need an extension of the act and the work carried on under its provisions. Today in the cattle trade the prices of hides are going down to ruinous levels, so far as the producers of livestock are concerned. Three or four years ago we were getting \$16 to \$18 for a cowhide. Today it is hardly worth shipping it out to the tanners. I hold in my hand two articles appearing in—

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Chairman, can we not deal with this when the Minister of Justice is here to speak on the Combines Investigation Act? This is to provide for what the item says, unforeseen expenses not known when the main estimates were put in.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain): I just want to say a word or two.

Mr. Abbott: Surely, it can be related to the item.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain): I want to put an argument before the committee to show that we do need an extension of the work of the combines investigation branch. I have already told the committee that we have a situation in regard to hides that shows that the prices are going down, and yet the public is still forced to pay an extremely high price for leather products. It is up to the government to look into some of these matters and not leave the field wide open so that there may be price fixing for long periods of time before anything is done about it. I refer particularly to the leather trades. Recently articles have appeared in the press—I have an item here about one saddlery firm which shows that the profits this year were 17 per cent over last year—

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I have let the hon. gentleman make his point, but I should remind the committee that we are discussing supplementary estimates, the items for which sufficient funds were not voted at the time that the main estimates for the year now closing went through. As hon. members know, there is not an item that will not be open for discussion when the main estimates go through and when the various ministers with their advisers will be present for questioning by the committee. I am going to ask the hon. member and other members of the committee to confine their questions strictly to the amounts we are now voting and not to amounts which do not appear in the supplementary estimates.