

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

THE SENATE, THURSDAY, December 18, 1947.

The Standing Committee on Canadian Trade Relations resumed this day at 10.30 a.m.

Hon. Mr. EULER in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, will the committee come to order? Mr. Kemp, of the Department of Trade and Commerce, tells me, as I think you know, that he had pretty well completed what he calls his voluntary statement yesterday, but of course we realize that members of the committee may have been sleeping on it and thinking about it and may have other questions in their minds that they wish to ask now. If so, let them do so and for ever after hold their peace. When that general questioning and examination is completed, as it may be now, it is then a question for the committee to decide whether it desires to begin today a consideration or examination of the various details of tariff changes, which of course are very extensive. I do not imagine there is any possibility of completing it today, and it remains to be decided whether in that case we want to go on with it now, or withhold it until after the recess. Are there any further questions you want to ask?

Hon. Mr. HAIG: Senator McLean started in to ask questions, and I was going to suggest, why not let him ask those questions this morning?

The CHAIRMAN: That is on the general statement?

Hon. Mr. McLEAN: No, Mr. Chairman; it was on the fish end of the business that I was going to ask questions.

The CHAIRMAN: I see no particular objection to your asking those questions.

Hon. Mr. McLEAN: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Kemp, I have been going over the details of the Agreement as far as the fish business is concerned, and I must admit that you have done very well in so far as I can see, in respect of fresh, frozen and filleted fish, but on the other hand the canning industry is a very important industry on both coasts. The canning of fish, as you know, provides for a lot more labour, and it reaches out for steel, and boxes, and so forth; and in the salmon industry, the sardine industry, and different industries on both coasts it is quite important. I might ask a question or two in relation to salmon, although I am not in the business, nor is any salmon canned on our coast. I notice that, while the duty remains the same on canned salmon going into the United States—25 per cent ad valorem, I think it is—on the other hand the duty on raw fish going into the United States, which would not bring nearly so much money as the fish would after it is canned, has been cut 50 per cent. Am I correct in that? And then the preference in the markets which British Columbia had, such as Australia and New Zealand, has been reduced 30 per cent. In other words it opens up the markets, possibly, later on for Russian and Japanese, and right away for United States competition. This to my mind puts the British Columbia salmon industry, which is a great industry out there on the coast, at a disadvantage. On the other hand, what compensation does the industry get for what we have given away, say on the Pacific coast, in connection with the salmon industry?

Mr. KEMP: To begin with, senator, I think I should say that we made an effort to get a maximum reduction of the United States duty, both on the raw fish and on the canned fish.

Hon. Mr. McLEAN: A little louder, please.