

establishment of a fisheries bureau in the province of Quebec. The establishment of such a bureau, Mr. Chairman, would certainly have been a great help to the fisheries of Quebec just as it has proved beneficial to the fisheries of British Columbia and of the maritime provinces. Last year at the beginning of April I wrote to the present Minister of Finance, who at that time was Minister of Fisheries, the following letter, and as it is a letter I hope that my hon. friend from North Timiskaming will not be offended if I am obliged to look at it in order to read it.

Mr. BRADETTE: Very clever.

Mr. GAGNON: The letter reads as follows:

Honourable Sir,—

On the 30th of November, 1920, a judgment was rendered by the privy council which put an end to the discussion regarding the administration of the fisheries of the province of Quebec. A little later the Department of Justice commenting on this decision, interpreted it to mean that "dans les eaux navigables accessibles par voie de navigation a partir de la mer" the federal fisheries service had exclusive authority. Nevertheless, the use of the soil, the "Solum," in order to set up, maintain and use fishing equipment still retains the character of private property.

This discussion put an end to a federal-provincial conflict which had been used, during twenty years, as a pretext by many to delay the methodical and rational organization of our maritime fisheries. It made it possible for our province like all the others:

(1) To possess a single and complete service: (a) To enforce fishing laws and regulations; (b) To see that the treaties regarding the presence of foreign fishermen on our coasts were observed.

(2) To put an end to abusive and wrongly defined pretensions derived from certain seigniorial privileges.

(3) To place all our fisheries, educational and police service under the direction of the federal government which alone possesses all the necessary means of action.

(4) To create a maritime biological service to study conditions on our coasts in the same manner as those already functioning in other countries and in other provinces.

(5) To establish on a well-defined basis a cooperative association of the federal and provincial governments for the purpose of stimulating our sea-fisheries. The highest authorities in the country have already recognized the fact that it is essential that the two powers work in concert in order that the administration may exercise to the full its salutary influence on our fisheries.

(6) To receive a reasonable share of the subsidies voted to fisheries, which amount to more than \$2,000,000 annually.

During the season of 1921, the Department of Marine and Fisheries supervised the fishing "dans les eaux navigables par voie de navigation a partir de la mer." It elaborated and commenced to put in force a series of urgent reforms, the object of which was to collect and form a personnel possessing a scientific,

technical and commercial knowledge sufficient to establish an equipment such as is found in all modern fishery services in Canada and elsewhere, for the purpose of the now universally recognized principle that in the fishing industry, as in agriculture, the State must be an educator.

In the beginning of February of the following year, after a debate in the Quebec Legislature, J. E. Perrault, Minister of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries, met the federal authorities, who, after only a few days' deliberation, yielded to the provincial government the administration of all fisheries in the province: the grave reasons which may have been given in order to justify such an arrangement have never been disclosed, no official declaration was made in order to inform the public on this point. Our population has therefore remained very poorly informed as to these secret negotiations conducted with the greatest dispatch and for an essentially political purpose without consideration for the interest of the trade in sea-products; they were rendered possible only by an excessive complaisance on the part of the federal cabinet of the time. The Right Hon. Arthur Meighen objected to the ratification of this agreement. (See Hansard, 1922.)

I am not yet acquainted with the details of the federal-provincial understanding and do not know what portion of authority the federal government ceded to the provincial, nor even if we are to understand that the provincial authorities have acquired the exercise of all the rights of the federal government; it would be strange indeed if this transfer completely destroys the effect of the decision of the privy council.

I cannot admit that as a result of the abandoning of our fisheries to the provincial government the federal government is now relieved of all obligations towards our fisheries, that it now has a motive sufficient to justify the withdrawal of its cooperation, as has been done during the last nine years; that it should abandon its program of development drawn up in 1921 and discontinue its fishery service established even before confederation. Our population cannot be content to contribute 25 per cent of the federal fisheries budget without deriving therefrom any benefit. In short, I prefer to believe that your department was created to relieve the social conditions of all the fishermen of the country, those of the province of Quebec not being excepted.

It is not yet opportune to mention the revision of this agreement. For the moment I wish simply to draw your attention to the abnormal situation of the fisheries of my province and to solicit your assistance in helping them.

I submit that your department, without prejudice to the provincial authorities, should be represented in Quebec, as indeed is the case in other provinces where there exists a sea-fishing industry, that it should possess a "pied-a-terre" at Quebec, which would keep in touch with our fishing fields and which would become the point of transmission for all the activities of your department. This "pied-a-terre" should be equipped in the same way as all modern fishery bureaux so as to provide all the service the present needs demand. It would interest itself in the protection of our waters and the products of the sea, the improvement of transportation facilities and publicity; it would