

discussed under the war estimates, and that it does not come under this item.

Mr. KINLEY: This item is for the improvement of deep sea fisheries.

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): It is to increase the demand for fish. You can call it for the improvement of deep sea fisheries if you like, but it is the item for increasing the demand for fish in Canada, and the matter my hon. friend is discussing at the moment comes under the war appropriation.

Mr. KINLEY: Does the minister object to my reading a letter from his own department with regard to prices paid the fishermen, under this item which has to do with the improvement of deep sea fisheries?

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): I have no objection to the discussion under the proper item, but this is not the proper item.

Mr. KINLEY: Does the minister object to the reading of the letter?

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): I object to this discussion at this time.

Mr. KINLEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, what is your ruling? This item has to do with the development of deep sea fisheries and the demand for fish. If I know anything about it, the matter I am discussing has to do with the demand for fish. The letter goes on:

On these fish there has been no international price, and so far as the department is concerned, exporters may sell at whatever price the market will bear. But there have been allocations in order to ensure adequacies of supplies for the West Indies. This arrangement is likely to continue in 1944. In other words, there will be allocations of pickled fish in barrels, but no export price control. Here again, however, it is the intention of the administration to try to grant more freedom to registered exporters, within the various allocations laid down, so that any exporter who holds fish will be reasonably sure of finding a ready outlet in some market for his commodity. In 1943, some exporters found that our quota system did not give them enough export permits to take account of their fish on hand, but in 1944 this situation should be less liable to occur. In other words, there ought to be increased competition among exporters for the fish in fishermen's hands in 1944, when these exporters are made aware of the increased degree of freedom that will be permitted them. The department hopes to have in the hands of every registered exporter, by the middle of May at the latest, statements indicating the policy for 1944. As I mentioned on the telephone, there has been no government fixing of fishermen's prices in Canada, although the wartime prices and trade board have put ceilings on processors' prices in many varieties. It is our belief that the greater freedom to be granted to exporters of salted fish in 1944 should do much to increase the competition among

them for fish and thereby to yield the fishermen a reasonable price.

I want to help the minister, and I think this is an important letter. I was concerned because the smaller fishermen came to me and said, "We want access to the export market. We must sell to the middleman, and we think the spread between what we get from him and what he gets from the export market is too great." There may be some argument on that, but the point is that men were permitted to export on a quota based upon certain years. Some of the shore fishermen, especially those whose work is seasonal, would have years when there would be a run of fish and other years when there would be few fish, and they found themselves without quotas. As a result they were unable to ship their fish abroad and get the higher prices. It will be realized that on the south shore of Nova Scotia, where the Boston market is only an overnight trip, where in days gone by men could take their fish to Yarmouth on a truck, put them on a boat and have them on the Boston market the next day, there is a great deal of concern when that market is cut off. I am glad to learn that the department has in mind greater freedom in connection with the export of fish, and that there will be more competition in the sale of fish on the markets so close to Nova Scotia. In the old days they told me that fifty cents was a good profit for a merchant on a barrel of mackerel, and in those days there was competition to buy the fish. Now they believe \$3.50 or \$3.75 is too much spread, and it seems to me that both the allocation and the setting of prices have been largely in the hands of a board consisting of exporters. While it may be true that they have to get permission from the government to set their price, certainly they have control of the price that is paid the fishermen. Of course the fishermen are doing very well at the present time, but I think all of us who are in business are doing very well. I am not so much concerned about the situation at the moment, but I am concerned about the future.

At the present time the price of fish is controlled largely by the export market, but in most parts of this country the fishermen cannot take advantage of that export market. Therefore there should be control of the price of fish in order to ensure that the fishermen survive in times of adversity, and that they get out of the fish all that the business will stand. I realize that fish is a perishable product, in connection with which the hazards are great as to returns and so on. But when other industries in this country are to receive protection through a floor under prices, so that they may not have to sell their products at