

Supply—Fisheries

produce a lot of salt fish, and in consequence of this failure the demand for salt fish this year is greater than the supply, and the price for it has gone up almost to the highest levels in our history. Further, the fact that salt fish is getting a high price has kept up the price of fresh fish.

From time to time there is strong advocacy of the idea that we should forget about the salt fish industry in Newfoundland, and indeed throughout North America. But it will be a sorry day for our fishermen if that industry disappears because there is no real competition, at least in my riding and I think in the whole province, between the various fish plants for fresh fish. The real competition is between salt fish and fresh fish, and so long as the Newfoundland fisherman has a choice of either selling his fish fresh or salt he will have a measure of protection. However, if we let the salt fish industry disappear, that protection disappears with it, and then God help the fishermen.

The salt fish industry is mainly a phase of the inshore fishery, and in this connection my hon. friend from Queens-Lunenburg had a lot to say about conservation. I agree with a great deal of what he said, because if we do not conserve the offshore fishery on the Grand banks the time will come when there will be no inshore fishery. The hon. member pointed out the difficulty of getting different countries to agree to obey the rules, and he cited the case of a Russian trawler which had a large net with a small mesh lining inside it.

The whole process of catching fish with dragnets is wasteful. It is not only the Russians who do it; we do it ourselves. I have heard of cases, and have personally seen some, where fishing ships have steamed for miles and miles through young fish floating on the surface of the water. These fish were brought up in the dragnets, and the pressure of water killed them. When they were hauled up they were thrown overboard because they were not big enough to be of any commercial value. If we are going to tackle this problem of conservation we must tackle the problem of the dragnets.

The fisherman's second need is credit, or money, some form of financial assistance through loans, grants and bounties, to enable him to catch more fish, to do that more easily, and with less hardship and danger. There is not much use in setting up a loan board and saying to a fisherman, "We will give you 80 per cent or 90 per cent of the money you require," because the fisherman who is down, who needs this kind of assistance, has not even 1 per cent of the money he needs. The fisherman must have easier credit and access to cheap money. He wants to get

better boats, better gear and better engines so that he can operate at less cost, and to do that he must have some form of financial assistance.

The hon. member for Queens set us a very good example tonight. He promised, and carried out his promise, to keep his remarks brief. I intend to do the same. For that purpose I have spoken in general terms. I could talk for hours on the individual problems of the various phases of the fishery in my province, but following the example of the hon. member for Queens I shall leave that until we come to deal with next year's estimates.

Mr. Noble: Mr. Chairman, I would like to join with the other hon. members of the committee who have spoken in congratulating the minister on his appointment to the fisheries portfolio. I trust that he may give this department energetic and diligent leadership.

I was pleased to hear him mention the great lakes fisheries and the international fisheries commission through which he is able to provide some influence on these fisheries. At the outset I want to say I am going to be very brief. However, I do want to make representations on behalf of the great lakes fishermen, who look upon me as their friend and supporter with respect to federal responsibilities in the great lakes fisheries.

It is my hope that the minister will show the same awareness and consideration as did his immediate predecessor in respect to the problems of the great lakes fisheries. The almost complete disappearance of lake trout from the great lakes is now common knowledge, but the definite cause of this phenomenon is not certain.

Over the years sea lamprey have been blamed, but many fishermen maintain that the smelt is also involved, not to say anything about exploitation by the fishermen themselves. Nevertheless, it is necessary that constant research be carried on so that lake trout or other suitable fish may be restored to the great lakes.

I should like to read a short editorial which I feel is appropriate at this time. It is taken from the *Ship-Shore News*, and it states:

Only a few years have passed since "lake Superior trout" was a featured food item on railway car diners travelling on the main lines through northern Ontario. Out of the window of his car the passenger could see the sparkling cold waters of the world's largest fresh water lake with an area of 31,820 square miles. Only a few hours previously the fish that graced his plate had been netted in this lake. A dish fit for a king.

A. B. Wood, head of the fish division of the Michigan department of conservation, has broken the news that 1961 may be the last year that nets are set out for trout in lake Superior. For all practical commercial purposes the trout have declined to the point of no return for the nets. In