

and the bill was defeated. I fail to see where either vested interests or politics enter into the matter. There has been an imputation against what I might call the good name of the deputy minister. During the five years I have been chairman of this committee I have had the privilege of working with that gentleman; I knew him before that time and I believe that every hon. member who has come in contact with him knows that he is sincere and honest in his endeavours to help the industry.

One or two words as to the merits of the bill. There are two sharply conflicting opinions with regard to this matter. One opinion favours unlimited purse seining, while the other favours the elimination of this type of fishing. The department has tried to steer a course between these two opinions. Purse seining is now permitted only during the late months of the year when the late sockeye and pinks are running; it is not permitted during the other seasons and at all times it is under strict regulation. The argument put forward by the department in favour of purse seining during this limited period is that it produces a better quality of fish for canning than does the gill net method. The purse seine takes the fish before they enter the river, before they reach any brackish water and before discolouration or loss of colour takes place. The statistics furnished by the deputy minister show conclusively that since purse seining was inaugurated in these waters the pack in that particular area has been far superior to the pack in previous years when the fish were taken by the gill net fishermen after they had entered the river. It must be remembered that the purse seiner takes the fish while they are still in the open water, while the gill netter takes the fish after they have entered the river. As I say, the statistics show that since purse seining has come into effect in that area the catch has been immeasurably improved so far as canning quality and marketability is concerned. The statistics showed also that despite purse seining the gill net fishermen were taking more fish than they had been taking previously. There is nothing more to be added; that is the whole crux of the matter. As to the change of attitude of the department, the deputy minister explained that compulsory inspection of canned salmon was first started in 1933 and that limited purse seining became complementary to the compulsory inspection in order to provide a suitable product for our markets.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Did purse seining commence only in 1933?

[Mr. Ernst.]

Mr. ERNST: In that area. I am not speaking from first hand knowledge; I speak only from the evidence given by the deputy minister.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): But it started only in 1933?

Mr. ERNST: In that area. Purse seining is carried on in other localities along the coast, but it has been carried on in that area only since the compulsory inspection was put into effect.

Mr. ANGUS MacINNIS (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I have just a word or two to say in connection with one or two points in this bill. In answer to the question asked by the hon. member for West Edmonton (Mr. Stewart) I would say that purse seining did not go into effect in this area until 1933. This was not commenced because of the inspection; the department had wanted to put inspection into effect long before but the canners would not agree. Other areas had been fished out with purse seines and the canners wanted to get into this particular area which previously had been limited to gill netters. If purse seiners are to be allowed to continue to fish this area it will mean the depletion of the area to a point where it can be replenished only by long closed periods. As the hon. member who introduced the bill (Mr. Reid) has said, this is a struggle between large scale fishing and what is generally termed hand fishing. If the results obtained by the machine fishing went to the men in the community I would not have any objection, nor do I think anyone could object; but as the situation now is, the results all go to the canners. Some of the large shareholders of these canneries are not even residents of this country. During the last week or two we have been endeavouring to create employment and we certainly will not create employment by allowing the greater use of purse seines. I think the house should refer this bill back to the committee or pass it without reference back and give the men in the gill net fishing industry an opportunity to continue to earn their livelihood.

Hon. CHARLES STEWART (West Edmonton): Mr. Speaker, this is a matter in which I took a great deal of interest in the early twenties, when I first came to Ottawa. I am surprised to learn that seine fishing has been allowed in the mouth of the Fraser river.

Mr. ERNST: Not in the mouth.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Practically in the mouth of the Fraser river, according to what I am told.