

reason—to pay a higher price for the fish. They have no beam trawlers operating on that coast except one that was built last year, a small baby trawler. There the companies are very much more interested in keeping the fishermen at home. They treat them as well as they can and encourage them to remain in the industry, and they have always paid them a higher price than we get where the beam trawlers are operating. The conditions that I am depicting only obtain on the eastern coast. I do not want to say that they are general all over Nova Scotia. And so in travelling along the eastern coast I found everywhere evident signs of distress. I found the fishermen discontented and disgruntled, complaining all the time, and even offering their boats for sale and their gear for sale. Very often they could not sell it and it was allowed to rot on the shore or in the outhouse. The young men were leaving as fast as they could, and some of the older men were talking of leaving.

The question arose in my mind, why all this? Are our people lazy? Undoubtedly we find laziness in every class of people, perhaps even amongst clergymen themselves. But it can hardly be said that people who have to work hard all day and get up at two or three o'clock in the morning in all sorts of weather, to begin another day's work, are lazy. That is what our fishermen have to do.

It is the lack of fishing grounds? Why, we have the largest and the richest fishing ground in the world I suppose. It is true that for a number of years the inshore fishing is not so abundant as it used to be. The fishermen tell me that twenty years ago they could take a little rowboat or sailboat and load that boat any time any fishing day, and sometimes they would have to make two trips. But for a number of years that has not been so. We have to go farther and farther off shore to catch the fish, and even at that the catch is not so abundant as it used to be. While statistics may show that the catch of fish has increased, I can explain that by the fact that new methods of fishing have come into use, such as beam trawlers which catch immense quantities of fish. And there are also the fishing traps which catch a lot of fish. We have now quite a number of those fishing traps all along our coast. It is a fact, however, that all along the eastern coast the inshore fisheries are declining. The catch is falling off, and, as I say, we have to go further and further off shore to catch the fish. And here you have one source of the trouble, as far as I can see. The fishermen have had to discard their small rowboats or sailboats and they have had to equip themselves with larger boats, and have had to buy motor engines, which are costly things. The price of gasoline is very high.

Since the war we have had a tremendous increase in the cost of living and in the cost of equipment. In some cases the increase in the cost of equipment has gone up three hundred per cent. Some fifteen or twenty years ago you could buy a net for perhaps five or six dollars. To-day it costs eighteen or twenty dollars. To meet this situation, we have not had a sufficient increase in production, neither have we had a sufficient price for our fish. On the one hand you have an increase in the cost of living, and a tremendous increase in the cost of equipment, and, on the other hand, the fishermen have not been able to bring up the production sufficiently, nor have they been able to get a sufficient price for their fish. The consequence is that we have large families of fishermen trying to subsist on four or five hundred dollars a year. I do not see how they do it. And so it is we have distress and poverty.

To prosecute the fishing industry as it should be prosecuted the fishermen should have still larger boats than they have at the present time, and more power, but very few of them are in a position to secure better equipment. They have not got the money, nor have they the credit. That is why when the Royal Commission was around we asked the Commissioners whether it would not be possible to have the government establish a system of long-term loans to fishermen as has been done for the farmers.