

Knowing the great interest which the hon. Minister of the Naval Service has always taken in the progress and development of the fishing industry, which is directly under his care, I feel that not only will he approve of the resolution proposed by my hon. friend from Digby, but that the entire machinery of his department will be placed at the disposal of the committee in the suggested investigation.

Mr. DUGALD STEWART (Lunenburg, N.S.): Mr. Speaker, representing as I do a constituency which is interested, and vitally interested, in the fishing business, I feel that it is my duty—a duty which I owe to those who have sent me here as their representative—to say a few words in support of the resolution which has been proposed by the hon. member for Digby (Mr. Jameson).

Allow me, Mr. Speaker, before going further, to offer my congratulations to the hon. member for Digby on his return to health. During a greater part of the last session the hon. gentleman was prevented from taking his seat in the House, and since then he has been obliged by continued illness to spend much of the time in a hospital. The pleasantest surroundings which the inside of a hospital affords, and the kindest attentions of those who devote themselves to the care of the sick do not, cannot compensate one for the loss of health, or deprive an actively-inclined man of a desire to be up and about his work.

This resolution, Mr. Speaker, opens up a very wide and very important question—that of the transportation and marketing of fish. But because it is wide and important, and because its solution may involve many difficulties, there is all the more necessity for its early consideration and all the more reason why the necessary study and effort should be attractive.

The hon. member for Digby and the hon. gentlemen who have followed him have given the house and placed on Hansard much valuable information. It is not necessary for me to take up the time of the House by repeating or adding to the figures already given. Enough has been said, if indeed it were necessary that anything should be said, to justify a compliance with the request for which the resolution calls.

I wish to take advantage of this occasion, Mr. Speaker, to say that the constituency which I have the honour to represent in this House, has an extensive coast

line, settled by a very thrifty and industrious people, nearly all of whom are engaged, or are interested in one way or another, in the fishing business. In no part of Canada, mile for mile, and family for family, can there be found a more prosperous, more contented, and happier people. Perhaps nowhere in the world can there be found a line of towns, villages and settlements whose inhabitants are engaged, as these are, almost solely and wholly in the fishing business, where such evidences of comfort and thrift exist as among the fishermen of the county of Lunenburg. This has not been accomplished without hard work, much exposure, great danger and rigid economy. If they are prosperous it is not because they have not earned all they have, but because they have saved what they have earned. If this House, or a committee of this House, can do anything to secure for them better returns for the product of their labours, they will be none the less deserving, and none the less appreciative of it, because their industry in the days that are past has made them comfortable now.

You have been told, though you do not need to be told, that fish is an excellent article of diet. The resolution of the hon. member for Digby speaks of it as a “highly nutritious and palatable” food. That it is nutritious there is no question, and needs not to be argued here. Whether or not it is palatable, depends on conditions. If it is not properly preserved, if it is not properly prepared for the table, and if it is not properly served, that is not the fault of the fish. There is no food which deteriorates so rapidly as fish. There is none which requires such prompt and careful handling. In former years when there was not a ready and sufficient market close at hand or when rapid means of transportation to more distant markets were not available, the fishermen were obliged to resort to some method of preservation. This was accomplished by the use of salt, by drying in the open air, and by smoking. Let me say right here, in passing, that many people do not know what palatable dishes can be made from fish thus preserved—do not know, for instance, what a fine breakfast can be made from a number one fat salt herring or a piece of finnan haddie when properly prepared by the cook. Dried codfish, which used to be despised in our own country, is now regarded as a luxury by those who have educated appetites.

[Mr. McCurdy.]