

*Supply—Fisheries*

Why do they say that? They give the reason:

The year 1930 established a new high record for thirty years.

Is that a good argument? Is that any proof that the conditions existing in 1922 were not due to local reasons? The very fact that in 1930 a record was set for the past thirty years seems to me directly contrary to the conclusions they have drawn. I do not want to take up too much of the time of the committee, but certainly I do wish to implore—I will go that far, and use that word—the minister to go more fully into this question. I have every confidence in his deputy in a matter of this kind, but I fear the deputy does not sufficiently grasp the local conditions along the bay of Chaleur and the rivers I have mentioned. It is an easy matter for the fishermen in a river which is land-locked, like the Miramichi—and if any fishing were allowed by nets in the Nipisiguit the same would apply—to put their nets out of commission between Saturday and Monday. There are no great storms on those land-locked rivers which would interfere with the placing of those nets out of gear, but when you take the whole shore of the bay of Chaleur on the New Brunswick side, beginning away down and following right up through Gloucester county, through Shippigan, Grande Anse, Stonehaven, Salmon Beach, Lower Beresford, Green Point, Belledune and up as far as Heron island in the county of Restigouche, the whole shore is exposed to all kinds of storms and it becomes impossible for the fishermen to observe these regulations.

I hold in my hand the last memorial sent to the minister, or at least, I think he has received it. It comes from Mr. George Chalmers of Charlo station, New Brunswick, and here is what they say:

Whereas the present salmon net fishing regulations are in some ways either impractical or absolutely impossible to perform, thus placing the fishermen in such a position that they cannot fish in a legal way without great hardship, and in some cases making it absolutely impossible to fish without infringing the regulations of the Fisheries Act, the Restigouche Net Salmon Fishing Association—

Which also extends to the county of Gloucester, which I have the honour to represent.

—unanimously resolve as follows:

1. Section 17, subsection 8(a) of the Fisheries Act at present provides for a tie-up from 8 a.m. Saturday to 8 a.m. Monday. We would like to respectfully point out that it is impractical to set a definite time for a tie-up, as it is difficult and in many cases impossible for anchored nets to be tied up at high water or when there is a strong tide running, or for the

[Mr. Veniot.]

stake nets to be tied up at low water. We suggest that to enable the fishermen to comply with the law, this section should provide for a tie-up at nearest low water following 8 a.m. Saturday in the case of anchored nets and the nearest high water following 8 a.m. Saturday in the case of stake nets.

2. Section 17, subsection 8(d) providing for the method in which anchored nets shall be tied up, is impractical to follow out exactly in many cases, as for instance the case where the net is particularly deep, or when there is a strong tide running. As to having a ten-foot section removable, this is absolutely impractical, due to the amount of labour involved as this removable section would have to be laced to the rest of the net each time, otherwise the nets would not fish. We suggest that this section should read that the fishermen are to tie up as near as is possible in this manner and not that they are to tie up strictly in this manner as the act reads at present.

3. Section 17, subsection 8 (e) provides for a two day close period during the week if it is impractical to tie up on Saturday on account of weather conditions. We do not feel that this is just. Weather conditions will prevent lowering nets on Monday morning just as many times as it will prevent tie-ups on Saturday. In this way when it is impossible to lower the nets on Monday morning the tie-up will extend to three or four days and in the end these longer tie-up periods will make up for those times when it is impossible to tie-up on Saturday, thus making the average tie-up two days anyway besides, if the weather is rough enough so as to make it impossible to tie-up on Saturday, the nets are not in fishing condition. The average tie-up is going to be two days anyway, as pointed out above, without forcing the fishermen to tie-up in the middle of the week. These suggested mid-week tie-ups would work a further hardship on the fishermen in that a great many of them hire labour which would have to be paid anyway during this two day mid-week tie-up.

Section 17 subsection 8 (f) provides that all fishermen who do not adhere to the present tie-up regulations shall not be eligible for renewal of licence.

Let us take a supposititious case. I do not know of anything of the kind having happened, but an officious fishwarden might have something against a fisherman and all he would have to do would be to report a violation of a law which it was impossible to observe, with the result that the following year that fisherman would lose his licence.

As for the reasons pointed out above it is impractical and in many cases absolutely impossible to carry out certain present regulations of the Fisheries Act according to the letter of the law, it is felt that the fishermen's licence should not be placed in jeopardy due to circumstances over which they have no control, and that it would be very unjust, and we would firmly oppose retaining this section in the Fisheries Act, unless the act is modified as suggested above to enable the fishermen to comply strictly with the law.

I do not intend to trespass further on the time of the committee. I will leave the matter