

Supply—Fisheries

to it briefly, and I referred to the international northwest Atlantic fisheries conservation convention, and the establishment of the international commission. I understand that at the next meeting it is going to make a decision, one way or the other, that either Halifax or St. John's, Newfoundland, will be the established headquarters of the commission. I do not want to miss the chance to put in a plug for St. John's. In this case I can do it in all honesty. Of the two places, I think that St. John's would be the more suitable. I do not know what the Nova Scotia members will say about that.

In that organization I understand that Canada, Denmark, Iceland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Portugal are at present members and that France, Italy, Norway and Spain have not yet signified their agreement to ratify the Atlantic fisheries conservation convention. That is the last information I have, but the minister probably has further information in that connection. As I see it, the importance of that commission, particularly in reference to the fisheries that we usually associate with the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, is indeed great; because the indications are that of recent years there is a serious depletion taking place on those banks. In that connection, I only recently read an editorial in the *Daily News*, a small part of which I am going to read, which strikes me as most important. Complaint was made of the great damage done to the fisheries by the wastage of young fish being caught on the Grand Banks and not being made use of. All these nations whose representatives are taking the fish are, as I say, or hope to be, members of this convention. This is part of the editorial from the *Daily News* of April 26:

Reports from the Grand Banks of wasteful fishing methods have assumed serious proportions and indicate the urgency of bringing about sensible regulation as a means of conservation. The wastage of young fish taken in trawls has been described as little short of appalling and its continuation is bound to exercise harmful effects upon the resources of the Newfoundland banks.

The minister is well aware of the situation. He saw what fishing did on the American banks. He saw the tremendous damage that has been done to those banks by overfishing. I believe that, to all intents and purposes, they are almost useless as compared with their value in the past. Certainly we do not want to have that take place with regard to the Newfoundland Grand Banks which are so important to the economy in the whole of Canada in the matter of fisheries.

The last time that I was speaking on this matter, I believe that I referred to what

somebody had written about the Grand Banks, to the effect that they were like a meeting of the United Nations in the daytime, there were flags of so many various types. The latest description comes only the other day. One of the skippers makes this comment. So great is the congestion on the fishing grounds that one Newfoundland dragger skipper recently had compared the banks at night to a well-lighted Christmas tree. It is therefore easy to see why measures must be taken, and taken quickly, if the heritage that we know as the Grand Banks of Newfoundland is going to be successfully preserved.

The other part of the editorial to which I referred is also important. In the editorial in the *Daily News* of April 26, with respect to the food for fish, it is stated:

It is clear that the supply of animal proteins is failing to keep pace with demand and that fish will have to be consumed in far greater quantities in the future. But the supply of fish can also fall much below the demand if the principal ocean reserves are not carefully conserved and ratification of the Atlantic convention by all the countries concerned is the only common-sense and efficient way in which this can be achieved.

That is all I wish to say on the general subject itself. I now want to go into a few particular matters with the minister, in the hope that he may see his way clear to comment on them in passing. He made a broadcast on October 27 of last year over the C.B.C. station in Newfoundland, in which he made some pertinent comments on the fisheries which I want to draw to his attention and concerning which I want to ask him some questions. At that time the announcement had been made of price support for Labrador fish. This is what the minister said:

We're arranging a plan to let the salt codfish association and NAFEL take in the fish from the fishermen right away. The government, through the prices support board, is giving a guarantee to the trade that will allow them to give to fishermen an initial payment of \$7 per quintal on the genuine Labrador fish of either semi-dry or ordinary cure. Mark you, I want to stress that this is an initial payment. The merchants will take in this fish, will process and pack it for market at cost. They are anxious to help solve the problem and they have agreed to handle the fish at no profit to themselves.

Rightly or wrongly, that was understood to mean what the minister at that time said, namely, that there would be no profit of any kind to the merchants taking in that fish. I agree, Mr. Chairman, that that was contrary to the way business has to be done and certainly contrary to what most people expect, but at all events that is what the minister said. In an order for return to a question of mine which was tabled the other day, the department does give an entirely