

October 10, 1946

Mr. Chairman Before we proceed with the orders of the day, I regret to say that Mr. K.M. Brown has had to return to his home on his doctor's orders and will be away for perhaps another week. We do hope he will have a speedy recovery. I also regret to say that Mr. Fudge has had bad news to the effect that his daughter is very ill at home and he has had to return to Corner

Brook. I received a telegram from him this afternoon that his daughter's condition was improved and that he hoped to return to the city by next Sunday's express.

I have also to inform you that Messrs. Job and Butt have been added to the Information Committee; and that Messrs. Job, Butt and Hickman have been added to the Steering Committee.

Fisheries Committee — Interim Report¹

Mr. Job Mr. Chairman, in the absence of Mr. K.M. Brown, who is unfortunately incapacitated, I have been requested as acting chairman of the Fisheries Committee to present an interim report. This is not a complete report, but I fancy that the delegates will nevertheless find it both interesting and instructive, and, I hope, helpful to our deliberations. It will give them a general idea of the great importance of the cold storage industry in Newfoundland.

It gives plenty of food for thought, dealing mainly with our new industry. Many people in Newfoundland will agree with the Fisheries Committee's view that the future welfare and happiness of our people depend largely upon the future development of this industry. Delegates will find copies on their desks, and it has been suggested that it is not necessary to have the report read in full, as it can better be studied by the delegates at their homes or temporary quarters before being debated. I would however like to make a few comments in presenting it.

About five-sixths of the report deals merely with facts and figures of Newfoundland's cold storage industry. During the discussions of these facts it became evident to the members of your Fisheries Committee that the future prosperity of this industry, and indeed of our country, depended largely upon future tariff and tax arrangements for entries of our products, especially those of our fisheries, into the United States of America, and that until some long-term arrangements regarding tariffs can be made for years ahead, it may be difficult to further develop our fisheries and particularly our cold storage industry. People can hardly be expected to make large capital expenditures for expansion of an industry until reasonably certain that a definite market for their products is available, and that it

cannot be suddenly taken away by the imposition of adverse tariffs. How vulnerable our country is as regards external tariffs is clearly shown by the effect of the so-called processing tax which was enacted by the USA some 10 or 15 years ago, and which has since then absolutely prevented exportation of our seal oil to the USA. Prior to this enactment something like 50 per cent or more of our seal oil production went to that market. The enactment discouraged, if it did not help actually to kill, a valuable industry. Today the world is literally crying out for fats, under which category our seal and herring oils come.

It naturally occurred to members that the USA might appreciate our need for some permanent tariff concessions, in view of the fact that she herself sought and obtained tariff concessions and long-term leases from us before erecting her permanent military and naval bases in Newfoundland territories. She did this mainly for the protection of her people, and incidentally for the people of Great Britain, of Canada, and of the comparatively insignificant population of Newfoundland. She asked for, or perhaps demanded, 99 year leases and also freedom from customs and other taxation of every sort. These concessions under the serious stress of war times were granted by our Commission of Government no doubt at the instance of Great Britain, probably at the personal request of that greatest of war statesmen, the Honourable Winston Churchill.

Can we blame him, or anyone else, for at that time overlooking the fact that they were asking us to concede without any actual consideration, long period leases of Newfoundland territory and other concessions which today Newfoundlanders consider should not have been conceded without some substantial *quid pro quo* for the owners? No doubt our little country, with her small popula-

¹Volume II:211.