

I have in my hand the report of the fisheries research board for 1946 and I should like to deal briefly with some of the matters set out therein in connection with fishing research in British Columbia. I do this, not with the idea of tearing down what has been done, but merely to show where I think they have been amiss and improvements made. Reference is made in the report to the investigation carried out on the Skeena river. Anyone who has given this matter any study cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that the Skeena river fisheries are much too large to be successfully covered by what is being attempted by this board. Their investigations in some lines have been far too meagre. If they intend to cover the Skeena river they should have more investigators, more scientists, and more time and effort should be spent.

Another matter referred to, is the investigation in connection with hair seals on the Skeena river. That is all to the good, but I wonder why they left out the Fraser river. The menace from hair seals is ten times as great in the Fraser river as it is in the Skeena. Looking through the records the other day, I noticed that some fishermen are refusing to go out on the Fraser river because the depredations by hair seals are so great they constitute a financial loss. Not only are the nets damaged but, the fish are destroyed as well. I have been on sand bars near the mouth of the Fraser when the tide was out and on one occasion I saw a herd of over 1,000 seals. Fishermen tell me that where thirty-five to forty fish are caught in a gill net, at least thirty would have their heads or tails nipped off by the seals. It should not be left to the fishermen to destroy these seals. I mention this because the fisheries research board did make some investigations on the Skeena river but, as I say, the menace there is not as great as on the Fraser.

Reference is also made in the report to the general salmon investigations made by the research board. They state that the runs of pinks and chums have been going down. In the north the runs have been going down from 1919 to 1944; yet no recommendation is made as to what should be done to build up the runs in that area. In the south the runs have been going down since 1938. It is all to the good to have the information from the research board that the runs are going down, but steps should be taken to try to preserve the runs and bring them back to their former greatness.

It is suggested to the returning veterans that they should go into fishing, but I would warn veterans in British Columbia not to rush too quickly into that business especially on the Fraser river. There is only a certain

quantity of fish each year but 10,000 or 12,000 licences have been issued. If more enter the business they are just cutting down the returns of those who are already there. Unless we do something to build up the runs to what they were in previous years, the situation will be serious indeed, since no steps have as yet been taken to go out into the offshore fisheries and develop these on behalf of our people.

Then, in connection with pink salmon, I wonder why the research board have omitted the Fraser river from their investigation. They did do some investigation on the Fraser river some years ago. I am not going into that other than to say that the picture of their research work on the Fraser river is not as good a story as I would like to tell. We have at present a problem on the Fraser river with regard to pink salmon. Up until 1913 the pink salmon used to go above Hell's Gate and spawn in the upper reaches of the Fraser river and in the lakes and streams of interior British Columbia. Not only did the disaster of 1913 block out the sockeye salmon at Hell's Gate, but the pinks practically ceased to go above Hell's Gate after that year.

Mr. MacNICOL: What caused the disaster?

Mr. REID: The contractors who were building the railroad blasted thousands of tons of rock into the canyon. I think the story has been told in the house before and I would be delighted to deal with it again, but I have so many other matters I want to take up. If I started to talk about that I am afraid I would take up all my forty minutes. That condition was cured with the setting up of the international Pacific salmon fisheries commission. The United States government and the Canadian government through that commission constructed two fishways at Hell's Gate canyon which has cost close to \$1,000,000, fifty per cent being paid by the United States and fifty per cent by Canada. It is interesting to note what took place last year. The pink salmon which could not previously get through Hell's Gate canyon because of rough water and the velocity of the water were able to get up through the fishways in great numbers. The United States not only get the first crack at the sockeye salmon heading for the Fraser river but also first crack at the pink salmon, and yet we in this country provide the home for these fish and try to safeguard them as much as we can. They are really Canadian fish. The international Pacific salmon fisheries commission under the treaty can investigate only one species of fish, that is the sockeye salmon. They have no jurisdiction or authority to investigate pink salmon or any other variety. But here we have another