

of their own rivers. Let me read a communication I have in my hand which sets out the policy in the United States. This was sent to me from the department of fisheries in the state of Washington, under the hand of Mr. B. M. Brennan, Director of Fisheries. Dated May 3, 1934, the letter is as follows:

Northern Puget sound does not permit gill netting, with few exceptions, because of the nature of the area, hence the fishermen are forced to use a gear which is suitable for that district. The Fraser river permits extensive gill netting as does our Columbia river. We have ruled purse seines out of the latter district and off the coast of Washington within our jurisdiction to prevent the catching of immature fish.

That is in the state of Washington. Up in Bristol bay they have gone a great deal farther in their endeavour to protect the salmon industry there, because no power boats of any kind are allowed in that bay. They do not allow even gasoline engines in the gill net boats, and all salmon fishing in the bay of Bristol must be done by boats driven by sail or by oars. Those are the precautions they take, so careful are they not to allow anything in that district which, in their opinion, would deplete or do harm to the great salmon fishing grounds in Bristol bay and in Alaska.

In the gulf of Georgia we have a condition which, if not watched, will be far more serious than anything which might develop in Bristol bay, because we have a short stretch of water called the strait of Juan de Fuca. All the fish returning from the open waters of the sea pass through that strait and up through the narrow channels heading towards the Fraser river. It is with a view, not altogether but primarily to preserve this area, first of all from depletion and, second, in the interests of the gill net fishermen that I have kept up a fight to have the seine boats eliminated entirely from the gulf of Georgia.

On two occasions I was fortunate enough to have them moved out, first a short distance, and then on another attempt, when a bill was introduced, the minister agreed to move them out still farther. When they were first allowed in, they were right up into the mouth of the Fraser river, and there was a most regrettable destruction. The seine boats are mobile traps. We have heard a great deal about traps. I shall not go into that matter, however, because it is already under discussion.

But I point out that the seine boats in the estuary of the Fraser river can be more destructive than traps, because, while it is true that the fish meet the traps, follow the lead into the heart of the trap and are thereby

caught, the seiners watch, just like hawks, and when the fish gather together in schools preparatory to heading up the Fraser river, the seine boats swoop into the midst of them, encircle their nets round them, pull tight the string at the bottom and bring the fish up. A catch of 10,000 salmon at one haul is not unusual.

The fish gather in schools or in masses preparatory to spawning; if they are split up or interfered with, as happens when a seine boat goes in among them, the fish are thrown considerably off their course, and the action of the seining to quite an extent interferes with their migration. It takes some time before they gather together again, heading for the head waters of the Fraser river. The seines catch not only one variety, but all varieties, and in this district where they have been allowed to operate the water is so shallow at times that the net of the seine boat strikes on the bottom and everything including crabs is caught. All varieties, including not only pink and sockeye salmon but spring salmon, are caught; and as the net of the seine is only three and a half inches in width, as against the five and a half or six and a half inches of the gill net, every time the seine boat circles a school it catches everything within that circle, nothing escaping. Considerable quantities of immature fish are destroyed; I refer to fish in the schools of adult salmon hordes heading to the head waters of the Fraser river. The seine net catches everything even, as I say, to the extent of crabs.

When seines were allowed into that area, it was expected and also argued that only a few seine boats would come in. In 1933, some fifty-four seine boats went into the district and caught considerable numbers of fish. In 1938 practically all the seine boats in British Columbia came down into that area. There were as many as 105 large power seine boats waiting in that small area to catch the salmon heading up to spawn. There are only a certain number of fish each year which come through the strait of Juan de Fuca to spawn. If you have 2,000 or more gill-net fishermen and no one else is allowed to fish in that area, the catch would be distributed among those men. But if you allow 105 seine boats to have first crack at the great hordes of salmon, this means not only that they destroy immature fish and split up the schools, but that they rob the gill-net fishermen of part of their legitimate livelihood.

I should like to mention what is not generally known, that the seine boat has from between seven and nine men on board. The boat is worked on shares which are divided into twelfths, five-twelfths going to the owners