

FRASER RIVER FISHERIES.

Mr. Alex. Ewen, a pioneer canner of British Columbia, writes to the Westminster Ledger as follows: In the published correspondence between Mr. Robert Ward and the Hon. Mr. Tupper, regarding the Fraser River Fisheries, the Hon. Minister has fallen into some inaccuracies of statement, wherein my own name is mentioned, which, I think, should be publicly corrected.

In the paragraph of Mr. Tupper's letter, referring to Inspector Anderson's transmission (in 1877) to the department of certain resolutions passed at a meeting of the cannerymen, he has not fairly stated the position then assumed by them. The cannerymen were willing that a tax should be imposed, but it was wholly with the object of providing a fund to meet the cost of the hatchery, which they were advocating as a useful experiment. The cannerymen's object in the matter of the hatchery was if possible to increase the length of the canning season by the propagation of spring salmon. The summer run of "sockeyes" was usually abundant, but of short duration, and it was not their intention to recommend the propagation of the sockeye, but to enlarge the run of the spring variety only. This they distinctly recommended in the resolutions in question; but, after the first year, the department entirely neglected that recommendation and substituted the "sockeye."

The amount of tax mentioned by the cannerymen was an outside limit, to show how far they were willing to go in support of the experiment. They had no idea of suggesting a fixed tax beyond what was necessary to meet the expenditure on fish propagation. If the cost of propagation from year to year became less in proportion as the business of packing increased, the tax would be correspondingly decreased. In a word, the cannerymen were willing to supply the funds necessary to carry on the hatchery; no more.

Again, in Mr. Tupper's remarks regarding his interview with the cannerymen's delegation at Ottawa last year, he states that I "advocated a reduction of the canneries, and that there should be no increase over the twelve existing." It is impossible that I could have made such a statement in Ottawa or elsewhere. Mr. Tupper has surely substituted my name for some other one in this connection, because as it is well known, I have always personally advocated that there should be no limitation either of licenses or canneries on the Fraser River. Such limitations, I hold, are useless in attaining the object for which they are ostensibly imposed, simply because, with the regulations as to fishing in tidal waters only and with drift nets only, one thousand boats could do no more harm in depleting the fisheries than five hundred, and twelve canneries, it is apparent, could readily be enlarged to pack as many fish as could be caught. The regulations adopted in 1873, with amendments, were the best yet made for the river and the only ones that can be carried out satisfactorily now. These included the restrictions as to fishing in tidal waters and with drift nets, a weekly close time from 12 noon Saturday to 6 o'clock p. m. Sunday, and an allowance up to 40 boats to each cannery.

All other fishers were free to acquire as many licenses as they chose. Theoretically I was in favor of no limitations on the cannerymen either, but, as a matter of fact, 40 was about as many as was required. At that time there was a great outcry that the fisheries would be depleted, but ever since the number of boats used and canneries in operation have been increased, the pack has been enormously enlarged, and still the fisheries are now as good and the salmon as plentiful as ever they were.

Mr. Tupper, in another part of his letter, remarks that there appears to be some difference of opinion even among cannerymen on the subject of dealing with licenses, and continues: "Mr. Ewen wrote my inspector approving of \$25 for each license." This is quite true, but Mr. Tupper should have gone further and stated my reasons for this proposal, which were that the licenses being unlimited in number, the high fee, while providing a fund for propagation or other purposes, would stop the issue of superfluous licenses; and that the system would be simple, easily carried out and satisfactory to all concerned.

That there should be differences of opinion among the cannerymen is scarcely to be wondered at, seeing that even the ministers of the Crown sometimes differ in their opinions, proving that great minds don't sometimes run in the same channel.

LIVE FORMS IN SUGAR.

"It seems hardly fair to offend sensitive stomachs by revealing such knowledge," remarked Prof. Henry Leffman, the well known chemist, in discussing the story in the Philadelphia Inquirer about the mites in sugar, "but the presence of the mites in the cheaper varieties is due to such things as bugs, lizards and little snakes which are ground up with the cane. In the tropics, where sugar can thrive best, all kinds of small animal life are exceedingly abundant. This is especially the case with lizards and small snakes, which abound in the cane fields. Bugs of all sizes and varieties are also very plentiful. If the effort were made, it would be almost impossible to keep these creatures entirely out of the bodies of cane which go into the grinders, and yet, but the people who prepare the product are notoriously careless in matters of cleanliness, and quantities of such filth get into the raw sugar in this way. In fact, I have heard that so great a quantity gets in that sometimes it becomes a commercial consideration with the refiners."

"According to the latest view of science sugars cannot give rise to the presence or support these small forms of animal life. They require nitrogenous matters, of which absolutely pure sugar contains none. This matter is, however, supplied in the sugar in the manner I have already explained. Now, in this connection it should also be fully explained that the last vestige of this filth is removed by perfect refining. Refined sugar is just as clean as anything else, and only dirty in sentiment. In the cheap, low grade sugars the insects, which have sprung from the nitrogenous matter supplied by the bodies of snakes, bugs and lizards, are most liable to be found. I have not given the subject special investigation, but in the low grade sugars they are very

prevalent. In order to make an intermediate sugar, some dealers mix the partly refined product with white sugars and in this manner spread the mites. Now, as to the effect on the health. They have really no significance in the human stomach. I do not share the view that they are likely to create trouble. The acids in the stomach readily destroy them, though in the sugar they show great tenacity of life. So, therefore, as a menace to the health of the community I do not believe they are entitled to any serious consideration.

"To digress a little, for these bugs are not a very palatable subject, nearly all refiners are now using ultramarine to make their sugar white. There is a special demand now for very white sugars, and the demand has given rise to the practice of employing this substance as a coloring agency. It is not, however, a poisonous substance. It contains no poisonous metal, and so small a quantity gets into the stomach that it really does little or no damage, but the principle is wrong and should be forbidden by law. It has a tendency to lead in the direction of practices of adulteration which may prove highly injurious, just as the habit of coloring cake led to the use of chrome yellow a few years ago. The presence of ultramarine in sugar is sometimes manifest in a bluish tint in the sugars. These sugars with the bluish tint are very popular. Its presence may also be detected by dissolving sugar in water, in which case it will form a bluish precipitate. Ultramarine is made by roasting aluminous compounds with soda and sulphur, and, as I have remarked, is not dangerous."

SALMON.

The season on the Columbia river is now fairly opened and of course in an industrial way there is more activity than at the time of previous reports. Large dealers however note only a moderate inquiry from any source. There were sales as usual at the opening of the season of one or two fancy packs at \$1.30 @ 1.35 for talls and \$1.45 @ 1.50 for flat tins. Perhaps in the aggregate 125,000 cases have been sold in this way for eastern trade, but there seems to be no further inquiry for early delivery, and in some directions there is a feeling that at the present moment the demand is largely supplied for some time in the future. The quiet condition of the market seems to be strong confirmation of the view that there will be salmon enough packed to fill the demand, but it is not plain that the combinations that have been made will not exert an influence of considerable strength later on.

From the New York market the best offers are at about the parity of 87½ cents here for Alaska brands. Packers would save money by closing down their canneries instead of packing and selling at such a price. Operators on the "bull" side of the market are full of confidence, apparently, and meet all arguments against future strength in the market, but it cannot be said that their arguments carry conviction.

The shipments of salmon from San Francisco by sea during March were 33,470 cases; making a total for the first quarter of the year of 143,445 cases of the value of \$623,825.—San Francisco Herald of Trade.