

(C.W.B. August 5, 1949)

BILLFISH RESEARCH: Fisheries Research Board scientists at the Atlantic Biological Station, St. Andrews, N.B., plan to learn more this summer about the billfish in St. Margarets Bay, Nova Scotia, with a view to establishing if possible a successful commercial fishery.

The billfish, known also as the needlefish, saury or skipper, is a wholesome food-fish which reaches a length of about 18 inches. It is found in immense schools from early June through to November in St. Margarets Bay where thousands of pounds have been caught in traps set for mackerel, herring and tuna.

However, the sporadic nature of their appearance from year to year and the difficulty of maintaining a constant supply has, in part, retarded the development of the fishery.

To obtain information on the biological and economic aspects of this little-known fish, the federal Board's scientists have conducted exploratory work which suggests that the billfish is a fast-growing species with a life span of three years and that the success and failure of year-classes could account in part for the sporadic appearance of this fish from year to year.

BORDER TRAFFIC: Highway traffic between Canada and the United States was eight per cent heavier in May than in the same month last year, according to the Bureau of Statistics. There were increases of one per cent in the number of United States vehicles entering Canada and 29 per cent in the number of Canadian vehicles returning from the United States.

The aggregate number of border crossings in May was 816,300, consisting of 579,100 foreign entries and 237,200 Canadian vehicles returning. Of the foreign inflow, 154,000 vehicles entered on traveller's vehicle permits, 406,500 were non-permit or local entries, and 18,600 were commercial vehicles. The Canadian traffic comprised 23,500 units remaining abroad for more than 24 hours, 197,600 staying for shorter periods and 16,100 commercial vehicles.

Cumulative totals for the first five months of this year place highway border crossings at 2,757,300 as compared with 2,480,200 in the similar period a year ago, an advance of 10 per cent. As in May, a large part of the rise was due to increased volume of returning Canadian traffic, up from 653,500 a year ago to 863,000. In the same period, United States entries rose from 1,826,700 a year earlier to 1,894,300.

"SHEARWATER" COMMANDER: Captain Edward W. Finch-Noyes, R.C.N., 40, of Oakville, Ontario, and Halifax, for the past year Chief of Staff to the Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, has been appointed in command of H.M.C.S. "Shearwater", the R.C.N. Air Station at Dartmouth, N.S. He will commence his new duties August 1.

STEEL INGOTS: Continuing the gains over 1948, the Canadian output of steel ingots rose in June to 260,256 tons from 249,710 a year earlier, according to the Bureau of Statistics.

During the first six months of this year, output aggregated 1,617,264 tons compared with 1,537,013 in the like period of 1948. The monthly average output for the first half of 1949 was 269,544 tons compared with 256,169 a year earlier.

The daily average output for June this year was 8,675 tons compared with 8,324 in the same month last year, while the daily rate for the first half of 1949 was 8,935 tons as against 8,445.

CASH AND CREDIT DEALING: Little change took place in the percentage of cash and credit business transacted by establishments in 16 major retail fields in Canada between the first quarter of this year and last, states the Bureau of Statistics in its quarterly survey of retail consumer credit. Cash sales declined from 62.8 per cent of total sales to 62.0 per cent. Instalment sales absorbed this drop, gaining slightly, while charge sales remained the same at 29.9 per cent.

The index number of cash sales increased from 166.1 in the first quarter of 1948 to 169.2 in the first three months of 1949. Eleven of the 16 trades showed decreases in cash sales and five reported increases.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR, 1950: It was announced on July 27 by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Howe, that plans will be put in hand immediately for the holding of the third Canadian International Trade Fair in Toronto from May 29 to June 9, 1950.

The preparation for a Fair of this type is a ten or twelve month operation. It calls for a well organized promotional program that virtually encircles the globe. For this purpose the Trade Commissioner offices maintained by the Department of Trade and Commerce in most of the world's principal commercial centres are of invaluable aid to the Trade Fair Administration, which is centered in Toronto. The whole undertaking is under the immediate supervision of the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission.

Despite various handicaps, some of them serious, arising from abnormal or unsettled conditions in the field of international trade, the first Canadian International Trade Fair, held in 1948, and the second in May and June of this year, met with an encouraging measure of success. Well supported by both Canadian and foreign exhibitors, they served effectively to widen Canada's commercial contacts with other countries, and produced some surprisingly good results in actual business done.

RAINS AID CROPS: Fairly general rains fell over most of the Prairie Provinces during the week ending July 23. Average rainfall since April 1 for Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta now stands at two, seven, and 17 per cent below normal respectively -- a marked improvement in all three provinces over a week earlier. Pre-seasonal precipitation, however, was far below normal in the greater part of the West and this factor continues to affect crop development adversely, particularly in the normally low rainfall areas.

Prospects in Manitoba with few exceptions remain good to excellent. Rains have well maintained the satisfactory condition already established in northern and eastern districts of Saskatchewan, and should now carry the crops to maturity in those areas. Some improvement is noted in central and western districts but relief came too late to most of the drought area in south-central and south-western Saskatchewan, where the principal benefit accruing will be to pasture and fodder crops. Crop prospects in Alberta are still, with some exceptions, generally poor to fair, although good rains have improved late-sown crops and relieved the food situation in central and northern parts of the Province.

Rain fell over much of Manitoba and except for localized dry areas in the southern part of the Province prospects for nearly all crops remain good to excellent. Harvesting of early crops has begun in some areas and should be general by the first of August. Insect infestations are abating and losses from now on are expected to be at a minimum. Hail storms have been of very limited extent and, while leaf rust is quite general, no serious losses from this cause are anticipated.

Rains received during the week have provided sufficient moisture to carry the crop through to maturity in most of the northern and eastern districts of Saskatchewan. Crop conditions are somewhat improved in central and western districts but further moisture will be required to ensure proper filling. While it is too late for rain to promote much recovery to crops in the drought area of south-central and south-western Saskatchewan, pasture and fodder growth will alleviate the critical food shortage to some extent. Grasshoppers are becoming more numerous in areas where earlier control measures were less concentrated and some heavy local damage is reported.

Crop prospects in Alberta continue from poor to fair despite medium to heavy rains over wide areas of the province. Some improvement is expected in late-sown crops in most areas but the greatest benefit will be derived from the improved feed situation in central and northern Alberta. Sawfly infestation causing 35 to 70 per cent damage has been reported in the New Dayton, Warner, Nobleford, Barons, Carmangay and Vulcan areas.

INDIANS AS PROSPECTORS: Through the co-operation of the Indian Affairs Branch and the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources and Industrial Development, Indians living in northern Saskatchewan have been provided with an opportunity to become actively interested in prospecting, the Minister of Mines and Resources, Mr. Gibson, announced on July 27.

Four Indians of the Carlton Agency in northern Saskatchewan, the Minister stated, are at present prospecting with geiger counters in the Snake Lake area under supervision of officers of the Saskatchewan Department. They will stake for the Crown in the right of the Province and will receive a cash reward from the Provincial Department for any finds they may make.

By an arrangement with the Province of Saskatchewan, the Indian Affairs Branch is providing funds with which to cover the cost of the field party of which the four Indians are members.

Officials of the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources and Industrial Development visited northern areas of the Province last winter and taught those Indians who were interested how to examine rock formations and stake claims.

EXPORT CONTROLS REMOVED: Agricultural implements, electrical supplies, fertilizers, antimony, potatoes, cocoa beans and sugar have been removed from export control, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Howe, announced on July 27.

This latest relaxation leaves only 137 items still under export permit control, compared with the peak number of 1,109 in 1944, and 667 in 1946.

The revised list of export permit regulations is available on application to the Export Permit Branch, Department of Trade and Commerce, Ottawa.

TEXTILE INDUSTRY REPORT: Wage rates in the primary textiles industry in Canada showed an increase of almost 18 per cent in 1948 over the 1947 scale, according to a report of the Economics and Research Branch of the Department of Labour, issued July 27 by the Minister of Labour, Mr. Mitchell.

The report, entitled "Wages and Hours of Labour in the Primary Textiles Industry in Canada, 1948" showed that while increases as a whole in the industry amounted to 124.2 per cent since 1939, increases in the component industries over the same period were as follows: Cotton Yarn and Cloth, 130.6 per cent; Woollen Yarn and Cloth, 141.3 per cent; Knitting, 113.8 per cent; and Rayon, 118.2 per cent.

The report was compiled from information received from 322 establishments having a total of 61,820 employees.