

from a resolution passed by a large number of fishermen living in a place called Sointula in my district. Lest I should be accused of political partisanship, I might say that I got nineteen votes out of the 212 cast in that place. It may be that these men have a sounder judgment about fishery matters than they have about political matters, at least I hope so. They write me and say:

According to press reports the Department of Fisheries is planning to close up the salmon hatcheries on the Pacific coast.

At a meeting of the Sointula branch of the Fishermen and Cannery Workers' Industrial Union on the second of April, 1936, the membership unanimously decided to protest against such action on following grounds:

Although the Rivers inlet area has been subjected to most intensified fishing for a good many years, the sockeye run has shown practically no decline due to the fact, we believe, that the hatchery operated there has effectively counteracted the havoc wrought by fishing gears.

We strongly maintain that the experiments on Cultus lake alone do not justify the closing of all hatcheries, as natural conditions vary in different localities.

According to reports the hatcheries on the Columbia river have been a tremendous success, also in other areas in United States the artificial propagation has shown splendid returns. Why not in Canada?

Furthermore, due to the conditions in other industries there has been a great increase in the number of people depending for a living from fishing in recent years. Consequently, fishing is more and more intensified. Therefore, if the hatcheries, as the only known means of replenishing the stock of salmon, were to be closed, a complete depletion of salmon would result in few years.

I put this up to the department and I received some data combating these views, as far as that particular area was concerned. When I communicated this data to these men, they wrote back that they did not agree with the statements made, and that it was a mistake to close the hatcheries. They said:

We agree with you that illegal fishing should be stopped. We also agree with you that the natural means of propagation should be protected.

However, the fact still stands that Rivers inlet, about the most exploited fishing area on the British Columbia coast still shows good runs and we believe the hatchery in great part to be responsible for that.

We still believe that the experiments on Cultus lake alone do not justify the closing of all hatcheries.

As the representative of these men, even though an unwelcome one, I feel that I should put their views before the house. If I was asked to state my views, I am afraid I would have to say that I do not know. I would not care to say that the hatcheries in my district, with which I am familiar, have been a success, but it may be due to the fact that

[Mr. Neill.]

the wrong methods were adopted or the fundamental principles followed were wrong. At the same time, I would hesitate to say that after we had spent four million dollars on hatcheries we should give them up because of the results on Cultus lake alone.

As the hon. member for Fraser Valley pointed out, and as I know also, for many years the department maintained with enormous vigour and warmth the howling success of these hatcheries. As the hon. member for Fraser Valley has stated, he has met officials who told him that they must not be quoted or their heads would be taken off, and I agree entirely with that statement. The closed corporation does not permit the fisheries officials to have souls of their own or to dare to be quoted. If the deputy minister wants further information along this line, I shall be glad to furnish it when we are on the estimates. We have the peculiar picture of every official being in favour of hatcheries and saying that anyone who was not was either a crook or lacking in intelligence, and then there is a quick turnabout, and the hatcheries have to be closed up holus-bolus. And the same deputy minister has been in charge all through.

I have just one more quotation I should like to make. A fisheries paper published in British Columbia makes the statement that the Cultus lake hatchery may operate this year. It states that while the sockeye hatcheries are being closed up and the employees dismissed, there is still some hope that the hatchery at Cultus lake will be kept open for a few months, possibly to the end of the year. They state that the number of steelheads caught in the last two years has been greater than for many years. They state that these results are definitely an aspect of the operation of the local hatchery. This might be because of climatic conditions or something of that kind, but I do think that when the hatcheries are being closed so abruptly, the action should have been based on something other than just the Cultus lake experiment. A policy to be in effect all over the country should not depend upon the results obtained in one particular spot. The biological report from which I quoted states that these results may be due to the enormous number of predatory fish, and they propose to attempt to do away with them and see what results ensue. I cannot and will not say that the hatchery system has been a success in my district. However, I contend that this is a matter that should have been discussed around the table in the fisheries committee where every hon. member would have had a chance to get the required information from competent witnesses who could be called.