

let it pass until next year, and charge me to inform the Government to that effect, which I respectfully take this method of doing.

The Oolachan fishery on the Naas is becoming yearly of greater importance to the Indians, as the oil is becoming of greater commercial value. White traders are on the spot during the fishing season, who purchase all that the Indians will sell. The quantity extracted is large, but it is impossible to get anything near a correct estimate from either traders or Indians, as they seem averse to giving much information on the subject, an idea may, however, be gained of the value of this commodity to the Indians, from the fact that several hundred families annually engage in the business, and that fifteen boxes of oil are retained for each family before any is sold. A box is of the capacity of at least ten gallons. The method of extracting the oil is very wasteful. Correct information in regard to the methods of fishing, or statistics of the quantity of fish caught, and oil extracted, could only be gained by an officer on the spot, during the fishing season in March.

When the Indians on the Skeena became aware that I had forbidden the managers of the canneries to purchase salmon caught by them in unlicensed boats they were very angry and indulged in threats of resistance. Finally they held a meeting at Port Essington, and sent to me their decision in a letter.

I would respectfully recommend that the wishes of the managers of the canneries on the Skeena and Naas Rivers be met in regard to the time of commencing fishing and that the first Monday in June be made the time before which no salmon should be caught.

I found the boat, provided for my use by your Department, of very great use, in fact, absolutely necessary to the efficient performance of my duties; it is, however, too small for safety at all times.

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### COWICHAN RIVER.

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BY W. H. LOMAS.

I have the honor to forward the annual return of the fisheries in this district. In doing so I would state that the quantities given can only be approximate, as no licenses were issued through this office, and as no licenses are required for boats taking fish other than salmon, it is very difficult to give even an estimate of what they take.

This is a matter which I would respectfully suggest ought to be altered; as I consider that all parties fishing for market ought to be under some kind of control even if only a nominal license fee be charged.

When the herring bait fail, the men making dog-fish oil use the Quar-lo salmon for bait, and in netting these often catch a few cohoes and sawquais which they generally ship to market. These men could scarcely be expected to pay a \$25 license, neither does it appear fair that they should do so, when professional fishermen round Victoria, who fish in boats and sloops for the market are not required to do so, although in their nets, which are very small mesh, salmon are often caught.

I have been on this coast for more than twenty years and am sure that the whitefish (*i. e.* flounders, rock cod, perch, &c., &c.) are being unnecessarily destroyed by this kind of fishing, as the nets are dragged into shoal water where the young fish are left to die. This is a very common occurrence in Victoria Harbor.

The same thing occurs in the oyster fisheries where the public are allowed to fish without any close season, which ought to extend from April to September; and no one ought to be allowed to ship oysters to the market covered with their spat, but should be compelled to drop the young oysters into the water as they gather and not clean them ashore as at present. A great deal of this wanton destruction of oysters would be obviated were private oyster culture encouraged. At present any