

*Supply—Fisheries*

in the whole Atlantic area. Instead of having five provinces all with different seasons and different sizes of catch, we will now have uniformity over the three areas: the Atlantic coast area where the salmon comes first, then the bay of Fundy, and then the gulf of St. Lawrence.

This program will involve the shortening of the open season for both commercial fishing and sport fishing. This is the type of program which has met with conspicuous success on the west coast, where we are happy to see the salmon fishery increasing each year. I am sure we shall have a similar result on the east coast. I feel I should say that we are very happy about the warm co-operation we received from the five provincial governments concerned.

I fully realize the urgent need for the introduction of protective measures to save this most important fishery from complete depletion. The commercial salmon fishermen as well as anglers have been asked to sacrifice a portion of their regular season and accept a shorter fishing period. It is not my intention to question the decision of the department in shortening the season and adopting uniform salmon regulations for the Atlantic coast. It is unfortunate, however, that the commercial salmon fishermen have been asked without warning to accept this cut in their regular season. I wish they had been given the same warning that the minister gave this afternoon to the western salmon fishermen. If angling is cut down to a period of say seventy fishing days, the sportsman or angler is still in a position to spend almost as many days as he desires with his fishing rod. Of the average of 40,000 salmon caught annually by anglers in the rivers of the maritime provinces, the larger proportion are caught in the Miramichi and Restigouche rivers in New Brunswick. I have my doubts if a shorter season will result in fewer rod-days and a reduction in the number of salmon caught by anglers in New Brunswick rivers.

The commercial salmon fisherman, whether his system of fishing is by trap net, set net or drift net, is the one who has been asked to sacrifice, not a few hours of leisure or relaxation but a substantial part of his earnings which are so urgently needed for the support of his family. The commercial fishermen are upset by this new legislation which is being imposed on them on the eve of the opening of the 1954 fishing season. They are concerned because they have incurred thousands of dollars in expenses to prepare their nets and fishing gear on the presumption of a regular period of operation.

These same fishermen, however, understand the seriousness of the situation and the purpose of the program launched by the Department of Fisheries. Representatives of commercial fishermen from Restigouche and Miramichi areas have been here in Ottawa

to present their case before the department. Delegations approached me when I visited my constituency during the Easter recess and all were most sincere and logical in their claims. If the salmon are going to be allowed to go by the commercial fishermen's back door what assurance have these fishermen that these salmon will reach the spawning grounds and contribute to the conservation and the reproduction hoped for by the implementation of these new regulations.

If the Department of Fisheries and its officials are sincere, and I have every reason to believe in their sincerity and willingness to co-operate, consideration should be given immediately to the provision of adequate protection to those fish allowed to reach the upper waters of our salmon rivers. An additional expenditure of less than \$15,000 a year for the next four or five years could provide adequate protection of the spawning grounds in the main salmon rivers of New Brunswick, and convince the commercial fishermen of the advisability of the department's action. I stress the importance of the minister and his department giving this request immediate consideration. Unless this protection is provided, the change in seasons could be of little advantage.

I am pleased to note that progress has been made in the concentrated study undertaken on the Atlantic salmon problem by the fish culture development branch and the fisheries research board. The predator bird control project on the northwest branch of the Miramichi river, the survey of all salmon rivers to record the presence of obstruction to migration, or possible pollution, is a step in the right direction. I would suggest that a careful study be made of existing conditions in the Nipisiguit river to determine the possibility of salmon reaching the spawning grounds. I would suggest also that additional consideration be given to the control of harbour seals at the mouth of Miramichi bay.

Activities in the oyster culture field have been most encouraging in the last ten years. Over 450 private leases for the culture of oysters have been granted along the north-eastern shore of New Brunswick, most of those being located in Gloucester county. The oyster crop for New Brunswick increased from a mere few thousand barrels in 1940 to 32,000 barrels in 1948. Oyster leases in the Maissonette and Shippigan areas deserve all the assistance and service available from the oyster culture section. Rumors have reached me that the staff at the Shippigan substation will be reduced to a minimum. Here again I wish to stress the importance of this particular service and ask for further expansion of facilities, rather than a curtailment of the present organization.