

a matter which is of very great importance owing particularly to developments of the last few weeks. I refer to the sockeye salmon industry, one of our greatest industries in British Columbia. The reason I raise the matter at this time is that an order in council was passed in March which is not, in my opinion, in the best interests of the industry, and particularly now that the United States have accepted the treaty. I present the matter to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the government in the hope that they may decide not to carry out the provisions of that order in council.

The industry to which I refer is a very valuable one. At the present time it is worth something over three million dollars a year; that is as it stands to-day, with a depleted run. It should amount to twenty-five million dollars if we had given attention to it and to the propagation of fish to keep up those runs. The sockeye spawns altogether in Canadian waters. That is one reason why the adjoining states are vitally interested. Without doubt, the restoration of the Fraser represents the greatest conservation project which we in this country have attempted. I draw the attention of the government particularly to the fact that the order in council which was passed on March 2 of this year is based on a report filed with the minister on February 21, 1936. One clause of the order in council reads as follows:

The minister, on the advice of the Deputy Minister of Fisheries, recommends that when the present season's operations in the above-named hatcheries—

Giving a list of ten hatcheries in British Columbia.

—are completed, they be closed, and disposed of to the best advantage, and that the employees be then retired under the conditions imposed by law.

That action has been taken. I think it must be admitted that it is very drastic, when one considers that the two countries are about to come together under this treaty with the idea of helping this industry and trying to provide that the run of salmon be increased.

The fight for the preservation of the sockeye has been going on for some forty years. I think it was in 1922 that a commission was appointed to investigate the sockeye salmon industry in the province of British Columbia. This commission filed its report in 1922. The Department of Fisheries prepared a memorandum based on an interim report issued by this commission. In section

15 of that interim report the commission stated:

15. Hatcheries.—Your commission has gone into this matter very thoroughly and heard a great deal of evidence both from employees of the said hatcheries and men engaged in the fishing industry, both as fishermen and purchasers of fish, and we are of the opinion that most of the hatchery operations could be suspended except that two hatcheries be kept in operation to experiment with the new proposed system and that a certain amount of the moneys now spent in hatchery operations be used for the clearing of streams, obstructions in rivers and improving the spawning grounds for natural propagation.

In this memorandum, to which I have referred, the department in reply proceeded to make out a case for the hatcheries. They referred to the fact that during the sittings of the commission only two hatchery employees were called, and they were connected with small hatcheries. I shall not read this memorandum in full, but I should like to quote from page 1 as follows:

There are twelve hatcheries in British Columbia in which there are several men who have had much longer experience in hatchery operations than Messrs. Catt and Reid, who, however, are both good officers. The district inspector of hatcheries for British Columbia and Major Motherwell, chief inspector of fisheries, could have given authentic and valuable information regarding results that are apparent from British Columbia hatcheries generally.

They then go on to show that from the official records the hatcheries have played a wonderful part in keeping up the runs.

Mr. NEILL: What memorandum is the hon. member reading from?

Mr. BARBER: This is a memorandum issued in connection with the interim report of the fisheries commission concerning hatcheries. Referring to the Skeena river watershed, this statement is made:

It must be appreciated that, with 1,091 salmon gill nets, each 1,200 feet in length and with a depth of 50 meshes, if it were not for some extraordinary measure, which in this case is artificial propagation, there would be no likelihood of the run being maintained.

In connection with the Rivers Inlet area, they have this to say on page 5:

Previous to the establishment of the hatchery sockeye salmon did not run in Meadows creek, which is situated just alongside the hatchery. Each year since hatchery operations were commenced fry had been liberated from the hatchery in Meadows creek. As a result a splendid run of sockeye has been built up in this creek and a considerable portion of the hatchery collection is obtained each year at this point.