

Sea and the Strait of San Juan de Fuca, is certainly in excess of 80,000 square miles, of which about $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 per cent. was to be made this nursery. The nursery itself, the region to benefit principally, would never be opened to the fishery. Behind the idea of such a nursery there is seemingly the conviction that the small fish characteristic of this region are young, but it is far more probable that they are simply a slow-growing population, from which, in addition, the larger mature fish may have been caught off. Added to this is the fact that there is no reason to believe that the reserve in question has been bearing even its proportionate amount of fishing. So regarding this proposal it is safe to say that it would protect only the region closed. However, the idea involved in this plan, that of extending protection to an area by totally eliminating fishing on it, is a suggestive one.

CLOSURE OF LARGE AREAS.

Before considering the last of the proposals designed to protect the banks, it would be well to observe those conditions which are not met by the others. It is obvious that the winter closed season would fail to protect the depleted banks during the proper season and appears inadequate even if changed to summer. In fact, there is doubt whether a season short enough to allow the vessels and fishermen a business in any way continuous would be adequate. The nursery, on the other hand, does not benefit an adequate area outside its own limits, and is not intended to be reopened. It is hence obvious that any measure must protect a large area for a sufficient time and during the proper season. This would be possible, considering the welfare of the fishery, only by applying it to portions of the banks alternately, making it adequate without doubt by covering all seasons of the year. We come then, logically, to a consideration of the closure of large areas for periods of years.*

There are certain general considerations which it would seem must be borne in mind in formulating such regulations. The areas must be so balanced as to add and subtract nearly identical reserves of halibut when closed or opened. Otherwise the fleet would be subject alternately to failure of supply and abundance. This would be the more so, the larger these areas are made, and the embarrassment would reach its maximum with a division into two alternately closed or opened areas. Since the depletion of the banks is unequal, it is also obvious that fixed regulations suitable for one year might become unsuitable on the replenishment of the areas. In fact, some flexibility must be given to any regulation applied for the preservation of favourable conditions in the fleet and the trade. A prerequisite for the passage of fixed regulations which would not become dangerous would be the possession of data as to the exact location and extent of the fishery and the condition of the banks. It would seem necessary, then, to make a careful collection and survey of the logs of the fishing-vessels preceding definite regulation.

A tentative outline of legislation for the regulation of the halibut fishery may be made, taking into account the aforesaid general considerations.

1. The banks should be divided into districts of such areas as: (1) Those off the Oregon and outer Washington coasts; (2) the coast of British Columbia; (3) between Icy Strait and Dixon's Entrance; (4) between Icy Strait and Cape Cleare; (5) between Cape Cleare and the entrance to Bering Sea; (6) any subsequently discovered banks not properly attached to the foregoing, including Bering Sea.

Areas 1, 5, and 6 are those least depleted; Area 2 has been shown to be badly exhausted; Areas 3 and 4 are presumably also depleted, the latter less so.

11. Areas 2 and 3 could be alternately closed and opened, 2 closed for five years, then 3 for the next five, and so on alternately. Areas 1, 4, 5, and 6 could be closed at the same time as either 2 or 3, their closure being subject to the discretion of conferees appointed by the two Governments; provided that, unless otherwise agreed upon by these conferees, Areas 1, 3, and 5 would be closed together, and Areas 2, 4, and 6. Each area would thus be closed five out of every ten years.

This arrangement would allow sufficient latitude of time to overcome any differences in the productive power of the areas, and at the same time make the closures automatic if the times of their inauguration were not agreed upon. It would also obviate any danger of placing any particular port under a disadvantage.

* On February 26th, 1917, G. J. Desbarrats, Esq., Deputy Minister of Naval Service, Ottawa, advised the writer that, "In all the circumstances, and in the light of your reports, the most feasible course that appeals to the Department is to divide the ocean into three areas, and allow no halibut-fishing, as such, in a given area during a term of years."