

Supply—Fisheries

the Ahousat band. I know this Indian quite well and I do not know whether the minister has met him. If the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration were here I am sure he would be quite proud of the progress that is indicated as having been made by these people who are now capable of writing a letter of this kind. I remember Paul Sam's father quite well, and under our educational system the son has made considerable progress. This is addressed to me under date of May 22 and reads:

Dear Sir:

This is to inform you of the fur sealing issue now at hand, and which has come to a climax here in Ahousat.

About the 12th of this month a notification, by radiophone and by word of mouth, went out to seven of our seal hunters to appear in court on May 18 in Tofino, British Columbia.

It so happened that several of our boys had been out hunting seals for food as there has been a critical scarcity of salmon here on the coast all spring, and seal meat is a great medium for fish to us Indians as you know.

We were not interested in the fur seal commercially until a seal fur buyer—Mr. Stanley Roberts of Vancouver, B.C.—came to Ahousat some time first week of April.

This man Roberts had a seal buying permit from the fishery department and also from the Indian agent to reside here on the reserve for a few weeks.

With the scarcity of salmon this year for food and commercially, who would overlook \$10 a skin for seals as that is the price given by Stanley Roberts? He had government tags for all seals bought, and these fur seals were inspected and O.K.'d by the fishery officer, Mr. Fred Shaughnessy of Tofino.

Incidentally, a very capable and efficient officer.

The seals were inspected and the money paid after that, but the funny part is that Mr. Shaughnessy never notified us of the confiscation of skins, and even the buyer doesn't know when they were seized. The buyer Roberts says that they might have been taken at Tofino from the s.s. *Maquinna* on the way down. There were seven hunters involved and 12 skins confiscated.

According to the statistics there are about 4,000,000 seals on the Pacific coast.

Is that about the right figure?

Mr. Mayhew: About 3 million.

Mr. Gibson: This is the Indian's point of view on this matter. The letter continues:

To feed these seals from January to June passing through British Columbia waters, require (roughly) one salmon while passing through our waters. That means that our fishing industry is out 4,000,000 salmon.

We will reduce that to 3 million.

Surveys by the fishery department, 15 years ago, have shown that one seal requires eight pounds of fish per day. So you see what a menace these fur seals are to our industry and also to our existence. Compared to the fur seal, the sealion and hair seal is just a handful and still the government has a bounty on the hair seal.

That letter is signed by Paul Sam and Philip Louie, the secretary of the association.

The minister has stated what the revenue is and I presume it is a gross revenue because if these seals had been taken by our Indians we would have received excise and customs duty. There were 12,000 skins taken and we have a net profit of \$820,000. The Indian's point of view is that if there are 3 million seals going through our waters and they eat one salmon apiece—they are there about 90 days—it will cost us about \$3 million. I think that would be a very low figure. I would think it would probably be closer to \$6 million. There is the fact that seals eat about eight pounds of fish a day. I think we could put it at \$5 a ton, and that would be worth about \$6 million, plus the \$3 million for salmon which would amount to about \$9 million that they maintain the seals take out by way of food. The Indian says that despite the fact that the government gets \$820,000 in return the seal food is costing approximately \$9 million. Even an Indian can figure out that that is a money losing proposition. When I first went up the west coast the Indians used to use seals as a regular part of their diet. I can well remember the great cast-iron pots. You could stuff a missionary in them. They used to be bubbling away at night.

Mr. Stick: Did they cook the missionaries?

Mr. Gibson: No, there were enough seals. We never had to eat the missionaries. As I say, the seals used to be a regular part of their diet. When I first went to Ahousat that small village produced about 1,000 seal-skins every year. That was a part of their general livelihood. It was never the Indian who depleted our seals. I do not think the fisheries department has ever contended that it was the Indian who cleaned up our herds of seals. It was the white man with his very intensive exploitation of the seals in the Pribilofs who did that.

The Indian says that he is restricted to the use of a small canoe and a spear when he goes out to catch seals. That used to work very well in the old days when the seals were not molested by anybody. In those times they used to come into the inside channels, and the Indians could take them quite easily. It would seem to me that the minister might very well discuss this matter with the United States authorities because they must have the same problem. They have Indians around Neah Bay and along the shores of Washington and Oregon, and their Indians must make the same representations to their government that our Indians make to ours.

An hon. Member: And they vote.

Mr. Gibson: And they vote. I think probably our Indians are going to vote. That