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The Fisheries of British Columbia, 1914-1915

Wm. Hamar Greenwood.

Output of the Province Is Approximately \$14,500,000, an Increase of \$1,185,065, and Comprises 41 Per Cent. of Production of Canada—Valuable Report Issued by Department of Fisheries, Victoria.

British Columbia fishery products for the year 1914-1915 have a value of approximately \$14,500,000. British Columbia leads all the provinces of the Dominion. Our fishery products exceed those of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick combined by \$1,185,065, and comprise more than 41 per cent. of the total fishery products of Canada.

During the current year the catch of sockeye in northern British Columbia waters was considerably better than last year, while owing to conditions in Europe, increased value was given to halibut and herring.

These are a few salient facts from the admirable and encouraging report of the Hon. W. J. Bowser, Commissioner of Fisheries for British Columbia, just issued.

Reference is made in the report to the efforts of the Hon. W. J. Bowser, working in conjunction with H. S. Clements, M.P., to impress on the Federal Government the necessity of relaxing customs regulations at Prince Rupert in order to attract to that port the numerous fishery vessels that operate from Seattle and Ketchikan. While the report does not note that such relaxation was achieved, still it is a fact; and as a result of it Prince Rupert has become an important fishing centre on the Pacific. More than a hundred United States

halibut schooners, it is claimed, have this year been outfitting, buying stores and bait, and selling their fish at Prince Rupert. This activity, assisted by the through refrigerator car service of the Grand Trunk Pacific, has developed the fishing industry in northern British Columbia waters, with Prince Rupert as its centre, in an astonishing way. And it is confidently expected by those in the trade that only a beginning has been made; but that with careful attention to business methods, fair dealing and civility, Prince Rupert will become the most important fishing centre on the Pacific, and place her geographical position reasonably entitles her to.

When Sir Richard McBride and the Hon. W. J. Bowser, on behalf of the people of British Columbia, made a con-

tribution of 25,827 cases of pink salmon to the Imperial Government for distribution in relieving distress in the crowded industrial centres of the old land, they wrought more wisely than they thought. It was a splendid advertisement of a grade of salmon that, properly packed of selected fish, has a high food value, but is strange to the British consumer. The report states that the shipment of pink salmon was found to be satisfactory, and further, and this is important, the War Office applied for 10,000 cases of it for the forces. Once pink salmon is placed on the list of supplies of the War Office, an excellent fish, badly named and treated in B. C., will come into its own, to the great profit of the fishing industry.

While it is true that the Hon. W. J. Bowser is Commissioner of Fisheries, yet he shows his singular genius for administration in no greater manner than in his ability to choose his co-workers, who, fired by his own tireless industry, work out in detail the plans of the Department of Fisheries. He is happy in having John P. Babcock as Assistant Commissioner and D. N. McIntyre as Deputy Commissioner. While no one will accuse Mr. Babcock of lack of versatility, yet it is conceded that his forte is on the biological and advisory side rather than on the administrative, which he cheerfully leaves to Mr. McIntyre, and makes the latter happy.

Splendid work in scientific research is being done by the Department of Fisheries, and this should be credited to Mr. Babcock, who has had the expert services of Dr. C. H. Gilbert, of Stanford University, these many years. The report

refers to the fact that Dr. Gilbert is continuing his study of the life-history of the Pacific Coast salmon with marked success. Dr. Gilbert is undoubtedly the world's greatest authority on the Pacific salmon, and his findings translated into legislation will do much to conserve the salmon wealth of this Province.

Dr. Gilbert, through scale-readings, has been able to analyze the runs in the principal sockeye streams, making tabulated statements of the proportionate number of fish of different ages which constitute these runs. The proportions of four and five year fish vary widely from year to year in the same river basin, and this fact has great significance in reference to the varying size of the runs. He concludes that

THE FISHERIES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA,
1914-1915.

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WATER HAUL.

T. W. B. London.

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