

SOCKEYE SALMON TREATY

14. The Sockeye Salmon Fishery Convention, between Canada and the United States of America, for the protection, preservation and extension of the Sockeye Salmon fishery in the Fraser River system, was signed on the 26th of May, 1930. The Agreement, although concurred in by the Parliament of Canada, has not as yet been accepted by the Senate of the United States. Your Committee regret the delay of four years—caused by the failure of the United States Senate to accept it—as they consider both its object and terms so reasonable and necessary for the industry, they would again recommend that our Government draw the attention of the United States authorities to the uncertainty and loss to this international industry, suffered by both parties, due to the delay on their side of the boundary line.

15. Although the salmon are hatched and reared in Canadian spawning areas, namely the streams and lakes of our Fraser River system, at the age of two years, or thereabouts, it was shown that they leave our river and shores and make for the ocean, where, for two years, little definite is known of their manner of living, but at maturity—or four years of age—in the case of the Sockeye, they return via the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Gulf of Georgia to our Fraser River system again to spawn and die.

16. On the return journey, however, they pass through United States waters, and so become a harvest for United States fishermen with their traps and seines before they reach our territorial waters, and can be fished by our people. It is a definite problem, therefore, for the two countries if the fishery is to be maintained, protected and extended by joint propagation. Fishery interests of either country, by hostile, greedy, individual action might exhaust it commercially entirely. The Americans, by fishing freely all the time, could largely stop the fish before they reached the Fraser on their return journey, or Canadians, by stopping escapement to the spawning areas, or deliberately destroying them altogether.

17. Under present arrangements, although no such destructive actions are taken, probably partly because of the pending treaty, and reasonable sanity on the part of both people, still grave danger is present, and can only be met by some international agreement to prevent unrestrained competition, which can only lead to the destruction of our greatest fishery asset in the Pacific Ocean.

18. Not only would the Agreement prevent the depletion of the fishery, but the joint efforts to propagate the salmon under its terms would make it both a more profitable and permanent industry for the people of the two countries.

19. Definite evidence was given of a large run in 1930, and the argument drawn from it that the treaty was, therefore, unnecessary, but the runs over a long cycle of years have grown smaller, and serious dangers open to the industry's entire destruction, failing joint action seemed to be a stronger reason for making continued efforts to have the treaty ratified.

20. The salmon fishing interests in general, the evidence showed, looked upon the proposed treaty with favour, especially the 50 per cent portion of the annual catch Canadian interests were allotted by its terms.

21. Some evidence was also given the Committee that in the administration of the present instrument, if adopted, or in any other similar international agreement, consideration should be given to the gill net fishermen of the Fraser River, who are very numerous, to see that their rights and interests were not subordinated to the users of seines, traps and other equipment.