

the extent and value of the salmon fisheries of these regions, with a view to utilizing them for the purposes of commerce and for the revenue which they may afford.

The seas adjoining the great territory which your Committee has had under investigation, are frequented by whales of different species, walruses, narwhals and a variety of seals. All these animals are valuable for their oil, but the large species of whales have heretofore been most sought for. Only a few years ago these animals had a much more extensive range than at the present time. Owing to improvements in navigation and methods of capture they have, of late years, fallen an easier prey to their pursuers and have taken shelter in the less frequented seas of the northern coasts of Canada. Now they are being pursued to their last retreat by foreign whalers, and some species are threatened with complete extinction in a few years if this condition continues. It is to be borne in mind that whales are long lived and slow breeding animals. The American whalers attack them with harpoons, explosive bombs and lances, fired from large swivel-guns carried on steam launches, instead of the old-fashioned weapons thrown by hand from rowboats. These methods not only destroy the whales with greater facility, but inspire the survivors with such terror that they seek the most distant and inaccessible parts of the northern seas and have entirely disappeared from the waters in which they lived only a few years ago.

Your Committee are informed that the Russian Government claim jurisdiction over the whale fisheries of the White Sea, and exact a heavy license from each vessel engaged in the fishing, and that the Alaska Fur Company asserts a similar authority over the seal fisheries of Behring Sea, both of which are open to the ocean, while Hudson Bay, Boothia Bay and other bays and channels in the northern part of the Dominion, which are resorted to by foreign whalers, may be considered as closed seas being almost completely surrounded by our own territory. Your Committee would, therefore, recommend that some measures may be adopted with a view to protecting the whale fisheries of our northern waters and at the same time of deriving a revenue therefrom. Should this not be done then as soon as the larger whales shall have become extinct, the slaughter of our smaller oil-producing mammals will commence and as these creatures live in shallow water or nearer shore, further encroachments on our rights will probably result.

The evidence submitted to your Committee points to the existence in the Athabasca and Mackenzie Valleys of the most extensive petroleum field in America, if not in the world. The uses of petroleum and consequently the demand for it by all nations are increasing at such a rapid ratio, that it is probable this great petroleum field will assume an enormous value in the near future and will rank among the chief assets comprised in the Crown domain of the Dominion. For this reason your Committee would suggest that a tract of about 40,000 square miles be, for the present, reserved from sale and that as soon as possible its value may be more accurately ascertained by exploration and practical tests; the said reserve to be bounded as follows: Easterly by a line drawn due north from the foot of the Cascade Rapids on Clearwater River to the south shore of Athabasca Lake; northerly by the said lake shore and the Quatre Fourche and Peace Rivers; westerly by Peace River and a straight line from Peace River Landing to the western extremity of Lesser Slave Lake, and southerly by said lake and the river discharging it to Athabasca River and Clearwater River as far up as the place of beginning.

Your Committee regret that they have made so long a report, but trust that an excuse will be found in the fact that upon a map of similar projection and scale the region in question occupies an area greater than the Australian continent or two-thirds of Europe, covering part of the British Islands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria and a part of France and Russia.

Your committee have reason to believe that a comparison of the capabilities of this extent of country in our own continent, exceeds in extent of navigation, area of arable and pastoral lands, valuable fresh water fisheries, forests and mines and in capacity to support population, the continental part of Europe to which we have referred.