

FISHING INDUSTRY

The Value of the Fisheries of British Columbia to the Dominion and the Possibilities Thereof Properly Developed.

RESOURCES OF B. C.

There are several methods by which commercial fishing is carried on in British Columbia waters. Trawling is yet in its infancy as far as these waters are concerned, but so-called bottom trawling was the first attempt to take fish by this means, that it is now being used on a very large scale. Fleet of steam trawlers, consisting of two vessels, will be very greatly augmented, since splendid catches of cod, flounder, cod and other deep sea fish have been made on every occasion on which the trawl has been tried. The halibut fishery which is carried on almost exclusively to the north-western waters of the Province is carried on by long and very heavy set lines to each of which several hooks are attached, baited with small herring. This branch of the industry has been developed until today it is second only in importance to the salmon fishery, and many vessels, all of comparatively large size and carrying crews of from 10 to 20 men each, are engaged in it. There are 72 such vessels all of which number 46 make Prince Rupert their home port, while the remaining 26 are registered either at Vancouver, Victoria or Steveston. So profitable is the halibut fishing as a rule, that it is not at all exceptional for every member of the crew of one of these boats to receive several hundred dollars as his share of the profits of a single voyage.

Unfortunately, however, although enormous quantities of this fine fish are landed every year, there are unmistakable signs that the existing supply is becoming exhausted, for the annual catch is yearly becoming smaller. For example in 1916 the total catch was 27 per cent. less than had been the case in 1915, while in 1917 a still further decrease of 8 per cent. was noticed. The worst figures on record, however, are those for 1918, when in spite of every effort on the part of the fishermen to maintain production at as high a level as possible in order to provide food for the Allied armies, only 1,902,000 lbs. of halibut were landed at Vancouver, as against 5,162,000 pounds in 1917, while at Steveston only 18,000 pounds in all were landed. The decrease in the amount landed at Prince Rupert in 1918 is also alarmingly large, being no less than 2,801,560 pounds, the total catch thus being amply sufficient to satisfy the needs which have been expressed for the halibut fishery is becoming a thing of the past. There can be no question but that the Government at Ottawa should take prompt steps looking to the discovery of new halibut banks, and at the same time to the prevention of the total depletion of those already known.

Both salmon and herring, upon the former of which depends in great measure the entire future of the B. C. fishing industry, are for the most part taken in nets, the gill-net and the purse-seine, each of which has its ardent supporters as well as its vehement detractors. Indeed the controversy between the gill-net fishermen and the purse-seine fishermen has reached such a pitch during the past twelve months, that it may be said to have been one of the prime factors in determining the Government to appoint Mr. Justice Eberhart as a Royal Commissioner to enquire into fishery matters generally in No. 3 District, which Commissioner has not yet completed his labors. Trolling for salmon in all the tidal waters of the Province, is also becoming yearly more popular, and is developing into a separate and very productive branch of the salmon fishing industry. It has the distinct advantage over either form of netting, that the initial outlay being much less, the fisherman in even a moderately good season will make a better net profit.

The controversy between the gill netters and the purse seiners already referred to, as to which is the most efficacious and least wasteful form of salmon fishing, the former maintaining that since the purse-seine retains any fish to whatever size which enters its mouth, it must be more restrictive to young and immature fish than the gill net, which permits all small fish to pass through its meshes in safety. It is true that there is a good deal of force to this argument, but it should not be forgotten that since the purse seine is, or should be, used only when the fish are schooling, that is during the period when they are migrating to their spawning grounds, there are but few immature fish present and consequently not very many can be caught.

The fact remains that whatever form of net be used, British Columbia waters furnish millions of salmon every year. In 1918 the canneries of B. C. alone, put up no less than 1,618,157 cases, each containing 45 tins of canned salmon, while in addition during the same season considerably over a million fish were sold to U. S. canneries for packing purposes as well as a very large quantity which were shipped in a frozen or fresh state for immediate consumption as fresh food, to points in the east. This question of the export of fish to the United States has always been a burning one, and has

probably led to more heated arguments than even the controversy regarding the merits of the different nets. If fish are exported to the United States for sale as fresh food, there can be no possible objection to the practice, for the spring salmon which is the chief species of fish so exported, is without doubt far better eating fresh than canned, indeed, it is a delicacy which even the blindest epicure of New York and Chicago might well be proud to see on his dinner table. But the difficulty lies not in the export of fish for this class of trade. More than a million fish were shipped to the United States last year for canning purposes solely, the canneries on Puget Sound reaping the benefit, while some at least of our own Canadian canneries were unable to obtain all the fish which they could reasonably have expected to handle. Such a state of affairs as this can most certainly not be said to be in the best interests of the Canadian industry.

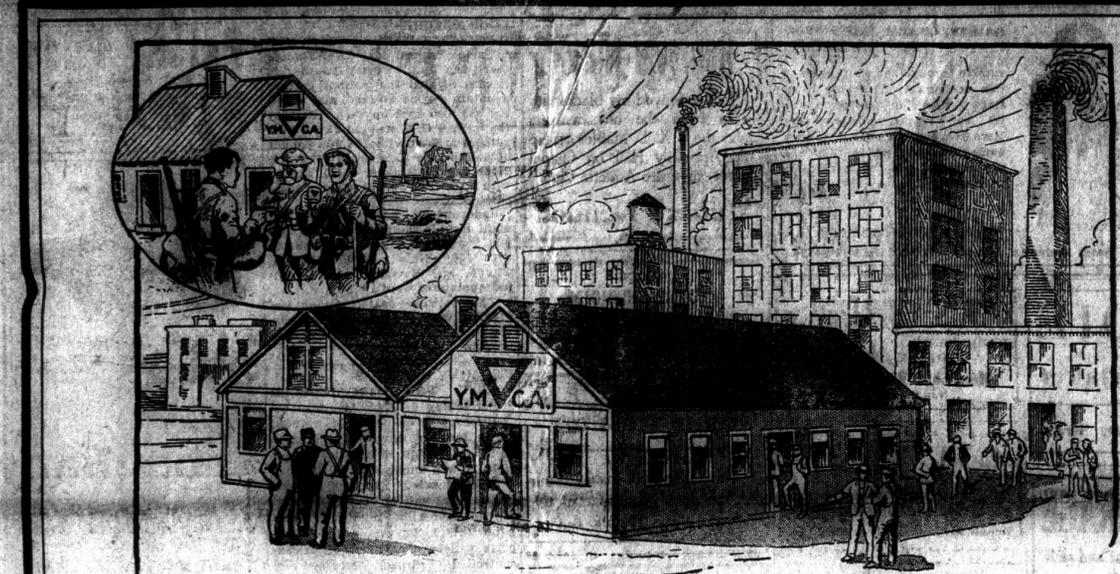
There are really three special interests affected by this question of the export of fish. In the first place the Canadian canneries must be considered. Secondly and to an equal extent, the Canadian fishermen who catch the fish, must have their interests protected, and thirdly and by no means the least important of the three, there are the fish themselves to be thought of, that is to say that in dealing with the question, the possible effect of existing conditions on the conservation of the supply of salmon must not be lost sight of. Canadian canneries at least a large number of them, hold that the export of fish for canning purposes should be absolutely prohibited, though admitting that no objection whatever should be raised to the export of fresh fish for immediate use as fresh food. As a matter of fact such was actually the policy of the Dominion Government in years gone by, for as early as 1894 we find that the fisheries regulations provided that all salmon which were caught for the purpose of being canned, salted, cured or smoked, should be so treated within the Province of British Columbia. Ten years later when trap-netting began to be used, a special condition was attached to all licenses which were issued for the same, which provided that should any salmon caught therein be exported for canning purposes, this would be sufficient to cause revocation of such licence. The regulations were made still more strict in 1907, when it was provided by Order-in-Council that all salmon caught in B. C. should be canned, salted, cured or smoked within the Province before being exported, providing that salmon might still be shipped for immediate consumption in Canada, either on ice or fresh. But the Fishery Commission of the same year apparently found that these regulations were not being adhered to, for they drafted a new set of regulations dealing, for some unaccountable reason, with the sockeye alone, in the following terms:

"No sockeye salmon shall be exported from the Province of British Columbia except in a frozen, canned, salted, smoked or canned condition."

It must be remembered in this connection, that at that time the sockeye was the only salmon of any real importance to the canners, for while both springs and cohoes had some value, the pinks and chums were very generally thrown overboard as soon as caught. But it was not long ere it was found that though their flesh might not be quite so red as the sockeye, it was not one whit inferior to the latter as an article of food, and the result of this discovery was to very greatly increase the number of so-called inferior fish which were canned. In 1910 only 93,000 cases of pinks and chums had been packed in the whole of the province. During the years of the war this number increased enormously, 404,000 cases having been packed in 1914; 450,000 cases in 1915; 520,000 cases in 1916; 972,000 cases in 1917, and no less than 1,025,350 cases in 1918. On the other hand the American pack of these grades had averaged 2,400,000 cases per year during the six years from 1910 to 1916, the chief reason for this vast difference being that the American canners had a ready and be it noted, a protected market for their product in the Southern States, while British Columbia canners had practically no market at all until the outbreak of the war created one. The result has been that competition among the canners for these fish has suddenly become remarkably keen, and this has entirely altered the situation, for in this competition the American canner starts out with the big advantage of the control of the largest single market in the world.

It has been estimated that in the year 1916 alone, no less than 16,900,000 pounds weight of British Columbia salmon was sold to American canneries, and this it is claimed would have meant a net gain to Canada of more than half a million dollars if these fish had been canned in this country instead of having been exported. The secretary of the Canadian Canners' Association is authority for the statement that the cannery machinery which is installed in the Fraser River canneries, could have packed all the salmon which was put up on the river during the season of 1916 in two and a half days working eight hours a day, so that it is obvious that had this 16,900,000 pounds of salmon been available for the use of Canadian canners, the latter would have benefited greatly by having been enabled to operate their plants for a longer period.

Again the fisherman realizes that the keener the competition for his fish, the higher the price will tend to become, and on this general ground



From the Trenches in Flanders to the Industries in Canada

Y.M.C.A. good cheer helped the soldiers in the war. Y.M.C.A. good cheer will help the workers of industry win the battle of life. The Red Triangle went with the

soldiers in khaki right into the front line trenches in Flanders. The Red Triangle is going with the soldiers in overalls into the factories, the workshops the mines and the lumber shanties of Canada.

Help the "Y" Do for the Workers What it Did for the Soldiers

The success of the Y.M.C.A. during the war as the "Organized Pal" of the Canadian army points the way to success for similarly organized work for the soldiers of Canada's industrial army in time of peace. The Y.M.C.A. is promoting the establishment of Red Triangle huts in the big industrial plants and factory centres under the auspices of the employing companies.

It is promoting the erection of Y.M.C.A. huts in isolated industries, such as mining and lumbering. Special activities for factory workers of the big cities are planned for the local Y.M.C.A. buildings. Towards the promotion, inauguration, and superintending of this Industrial Extension of the Y.M.C.A. to the workers, a part of the Red Triangle Fund, for which your contribution is requested, will be devoted.

NATION-WIDE APPEAL

Red Triangle Campaign

\$1,100,000 May 5th to 9th

Our plan for Y.M.C.A. extension to the industries is to enlist the sympathy of the president of the company or the heads of the firm, and the management of the plant, to explain our scheme of improved industrial relationships based upon the happiness and the welfare of the workers, and to get the employers to undertake the erection of a Y.M.C.A. building, fully equipped, situated right in the plant.

Is going now into those isolated districts where industrial workers like our miners and lumbermen are fighting the battle of life in the front trenches of civilization.

In some districts where lumbering operations are active, trained Y.M.C.A. men drive from camp to camp during the winter equipped with portable stereopticon lantern outfits. They give illustrated talks, and entertainments introducing the element of play among the hard-working shanty boys by such games as volley ball, boxing, etc.

In some cases, a number of smaller firms would co-operate, and the Y.M.C.A. building would be centrally located for the convenience of a whole group of factories.

For Women and Girls

What the Y.M.C.A. aims to do for the men and boys of Canada's industries, the Young Women's Christian Association aims to do for women and girls. The Dominion Council of the Y.W.C.A. has prepared a budget calling for an appropriation of \$175,000, and it is proposed to set aside that amount from the Red Triangle Fund for their use. Y.M.C.A. buildings are built and equipped on lines similar to those in the soldiers' camps, or like regular Y.M.C.A. buildings in the cities, according to the amount appropriated for the purpose by the companies. They should be furnished with a gymnasium, shower bath, swimming pool, canteen, reading and writing room, billiard tables, and an assembly hall for sing-songs, lectures, motion pictures, concerts, social gatherings, etc. To promote and superintend this project for our soldiers of industry part of the Red Triangle fund will be devoted.

A Lumberman's Endorsement

One lumber operator says, "You have put my man-catcher out of business. Where before I had three gangs hired—one on the way in, one at work in the woods, and the other on the way out, now I need only one."

At the local Y.M.C.A.'s special programmes for industrial operatives will be aided from the Red Triangle fund. They will be offered recreation, entertainment and opportunity for self-development. Classes in various subjects of special interest or value to industrial workers will be held.

In districts where a considerable non-English-speaking population prevails, a knowledge of the English language, of Canada and of the principles of Canadian citizenship and of social responsibility will be promoted by the Y.M.C.A.

Recreation for Workers

This work has already been inaugurated in Sault Ste. Marie, London, St. Catharines, Fort William, Port Arthur, Vancouver, and Toronto. Y.M.C.A. buildings are built and equipped on lines similar to those in the soldiers' camps, or like regular Y.M.C.A. buildings in the cities, according to the amount appropriated for the purpose by the companies. They should be furnished with a gymnasium, shower bath, swimming pool, canteen, reading and writing room, billiard tables, and an assembly hall for sing-songs, lectures, motion pictures, concerts, social gatherings, etc. To promote and superintend this project for our soldiers of industry part of the Red Triangle fund will be devoted.

With the support of the operating companies, Red Triangle huts will be established and equipped with canteen, billiard and

Help the "Y" complete its work for soldiers, help extend "Y" service to Canadian boys, help bring the Red Triangle to the Army of Industry and to Rural Canadian Life.

National Council, Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada

The Red Triangle Campaign is under the distinguished patronage of His Excellency, the Duke of Devonshire, K.G., G.C.M.G., G.C.F.O., P.C.

Hon. Campaign Chairman: JOHN W. ROSE, Montreal. Campaign Chairman: G. HERBERT WOOD, Toronto. Campaign Treasurer: THOMAS BRADSHAW, Toronto. Campaign Director: CHAS. W. BURNER, Toronto.

coupled with the fact that it is only of late years that the American canners have become really active buyers of his pinks and chums, he opposes the placing of any embargo on the export of salmon. And yet it cannot be argued that the interests of the Canadian canners and the Canadian fishermen are divergent. On the contrary it is plain that they must in reality be identical for what tends to build up the British Columbia fishing industry on a solid basis must inevitably be to the ultimate advantage of all concerned. And what of the fish themselves? It is clear that wherever keen competition exists, high prices will prevail, and the inevitable result will be that there will be far too much overfishing and transgressing of the regulations, while under the conditions existing today there is no manner of control exercised over the fish buyers. The Royal Commission of 1917 drew special attention to this phase of the situation in its report and while not going so far as actually to recommend the prohibition of the export of fish, urged upon the Government in the strongest possible terms the absolute necessity for taking some adequate steps for the prevention of both these evils. (To be Continued.)