

A few remarks should be made in regard to these Agencies individually:-

Babine Agency

Agent G.C. Mortimer states that the 2000 Indians of this Agency consume approximately 260,000 fish, annually, 140,000 of which are of the sockeye variety, much of which is caught at the head waters of salmon rivers and streams which practice the Department of Fisheries desires to avoid. To these Indians the dried fish sent up from the coast as samples by the Fisheries Department were not satisfactory, owing to the method of curing. The Agent states he is of opinion that while the supplying of fish from the coast might have the effect of considerably curtailing the annual catch of sockeye salmon, it would be a very difficult matter to eliminate the catch entirely. He further is of the opinion that the supplying of fish by the Department would encourage laziness and lead to discontent inasmuch as the Indians of the Interior live almost entirely by means of fishing and hunting. If fish are to be sent Agent Mortimer thinks that salted fish in barrels would be more likely to be acceptable. While the Agent thinks the suggestion to send fish to the Interior Indians from the Coast as a means of curtailing the spearing and netting of fish proceeding to the spawning grounds would be good in principle the time is not opportune for such a movement, and that the matter should be held in abeyance until employment conditions are more normal and the employment of the Indians is general.

Bella Cooola Agency

The Ulkatche Indians, numbering 122, are in the habit of taking about 1600 sockeye salmon annually. The experiment of sending dried salmon from the coast has not yet been tried. Nor is it likely that if dried salmon were supplied, or the present practice of fishing for sockeye salmon continued, the propagation of the sockeye fish would be appreciably affected. The Indians would be encouraged in idleness and their self-reliance would be lessened at the expense of the Department. The distribution of dried salmon by pack train would also be expensive.

Skeena River Agency

The principal sockeye catch by the Indians of this Agency numbering 2292, is on the coast and under the control of the Fisheries Department during the summer commercial fishing period. While the Indians do not smoke fish of the sockeye variety for their winter food, they nevertheless use a quantity taken fresh from the water as they desire them. Restriction of the Nass River or Skeena River Indians in the matter of taking sockeye for food would be strenuously objected to and any effort to supply them with dried fish from the coast would not eliminate the taking of fish for food by natural means. The Indians do not abuse the disposal of sockeye, except when induced by unscrupulous fish buyers to sell the fish for commercial purposes from above the tidal boundaries. The constant vigilance of the Fisheries patrol officers with boat reduces the practice to a minimum however.

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RG 10, C-11-2, vol. 11298

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