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## Report of Provincial Fisheries Department

**1919 Result of British Columbia Salmon Pack and Other Fisheries Satisfactory—Fraser River Shows Severe Depletion—Valuable Scientific Work Being Carried on by Department.**

The Hon. William Sloan, Commissioner of Fisheries, has just issued the report of the Provincial Fisheries Department for the year 1919, which he placed before the Legislature in April last. Its publication has been delayed owing to the press of work in the hands of the King's Printer. The report and its appendix deals at length with the commercial fisheries of the Province, especially its salmon fisheries, contains reports from the salmon spawning grounds of the leading salmon producing rivers, a valuable contribution on the life-history of the sockeye salmon, a memorandum by William Sloan respecting the salmon fishery regulations, and a special paper on the Fraser River salmon situation — a reclamation project by Mr. Babcock, the Commissioner's assistant.

The value of the fishery products of Canada for the year ending December 31st, 1918, totalled \$60,250,514, as against \$52,312,044 for the preceding year, notwithstanding that the latter was considerably greater than in any preceding year. During 1918 British Columbia contributed fishery products of a total value of \$27,282,223, or 48 per cent of the total for the Dominion. As in recent years British Columbia again led all the Provinces of Canada in the value of her fishery products. Her output for 1918 exceeded in value that of Nova Scotia by \$12,139,157, and exceeded that of all the other Provinces combined by \$9,456,968. Salmon products totalled \$17,207,245, halibut \$5,196,539, herring \$1,742,757, and whales \$1,382,278. In all some twenty species of food fish were marketed, besides clams, crabs and oysters.

The salmon pack for the year 1919 totalled 1,393,156 cases. It was 223,000 cases less than in the record year 1918. The total pack of all grades of salmon on the Fraser River system in British Columbia waters in 1919 totalled but 163,123 cases. The catch of sockeye contributed but 34,068 cases, or 38½ per cent less than that of the brood year, 1915. The catch of sockeye in American waters of

the Fraser system gave a pack of but 64,346 cases, as against 87,465 cases in its brood year 1915. The pack of sockeye in the entire Fraser system was but 98,414 cases, as against 178,595 cases in 1915, a decline for that cycle of over 50 per cent, and, the report states, further demonstrates that the runs of sockeye to the Fraser River system are "perilously near extermination."

The reports from the spawning-beds in 1919 show that there were less sockeye on the beds of the upper section of

the Fraser than in any former year, and that there were a greater number of sockeye in the Harrison-Lillooet Lakes section and the lower Fraser than in recent years. Mr. Babcock, who made the inspection of the Fraser, attributes this increase to the work of the hatcheries in 1915. In his report Mr. Babcock reviews conditions in the canyon of the Fraser at Hell's Gate, and states that the reports that the river's channel there is still so blocked as to prevent the passage of sockeye to the waters above, and that the sockeye that reached there in 1919 did not get through, is untrue. He says:

"All the sockeye that reached there passed through the canyon without more delay than often occurred before the slide of 1913. Conditions at Hell's Gate since 1914, when the channel was cleared, have been and are now as favorable for the passage of all species of salmon as they were previous to the slides of 1913 and 1914."

The report deals at length with the halibut fishery and shows that the catch in 1919 totalled 19,198,565 pounds, a

gain over 1918 of 2,501,565 pounds. In commenting on the Canadian-American halibut treaty signed in 1919, and now before the United States Senate, the report takes exception to the inadequacy of the closed season provisions of the treaty. Instead of having a closed season for all fishing for halibut by Canadian or United States vessels, the report advocates that the known halibut banks of the Pacific be divided into six districts, which should be alternately closed for five years, in such manner that some of the banks would at all times be open to the fishermen. The argument advanced in sustaining this position is based upon the results of the special investigations which were made

REPORT OF PROVINCIAL FISHERIES  
DEPARTMENT.

INCIDENCE OF CANADIAN MUNICIPAL  
TAXATION.

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TRADE.

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COMPENSATION.

PROVINCIAL PRODUCTION OF LEAD,  
COPPER AND ZINC.

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INSURANCE, MUNICIPAL, LUMBER,  
MINING AND OTHER  
INFORMATION