

Swan's mission has been, that he has tested and brought prominently into notice, the superior qualities, for food and market, of the coal-fish, before mentioned. While at Skidegate, at the southern end of Graham Island, the most northerly of the Queen Charlotte group, Mr. Swan employed Indians to procure specimens of the fish in question. Several hundreds, caught with the hook in the deep waters on the outer shore, were soon brought in. Of these a number were cured by salting in the way that cod are usually cured. Some of these were distributed in Victoria, where, by those who partook of them, they were very highly appreciated. Four boxes of the remainder were despatched to Washington by rail, and their appreciation there, has been favorable in a high degree—and under the name of black cod which has been substituted for its former name, this product of our waters is now attracting much attention abroad. This may be inferred from the following extract from one of our local newspapers of the 13th instant, being portion of a communication from Mr. Swan, dated February 8th.

"The following important letter about black cod was received by me to-day from Prof. Spencer F. Baird, United States Fish Commissioner, Washington, D. C., and I transmit it entire, to show those of your readers who may be interested, that there is already a market in the east for black cod, and the first who engage in it will reap the largest share of profits."

UNITED STATES COMMISSION OF FISH AND FISHERIES,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., 30th January, 1884.

DEAR MR. SWAN:—There continues to be enquires for samples of the black cod for smoking; the general impression being, as stated, that the fish is of more value than appeared at first. If you can therefore arrange to have a few hundred weight properly prepared, and send on so as to extend the test, it will help the boom of the fish.

(Signed) S. F. BAIRD,  
Commissioner.

17. In view of the high commendations that have been elicited regarding the valuable qualities of this fish, confirmatory as they are of the appreciation by the few among the early settlers who had the opportunity of judging, it seems superfluous to add more. I may, however, state, in partial addition to what has before been written, that, when dry-salted like the cod, it resembles that fish greatly in appearance. But when cooked, while retaining in a great degree the appearance of the salt cod similarly treated, the flesh fiber is more delicate, and it has a degree of richness approaching at least to that of the primest salmon. In fine I may state, that hitherto the natives of Queen Charlotte Islands have employed for the capture of these fish, a peculiarly constructed spring-hook—but it may be assumed that a hook of this ingenious construction is not indispensable, or in any case could be readily imitated, in steel, by our local artificers. A specimen of this ingenious hook, from my own private collection, I sent to the International Fisheries Exhibition, and it will be found described in catalogue of contributions from British Columbia, Article 21. By the hook, then, at first, and probably with the ordinary cod-hook, these fish will continue to be captured. But new appliances will doubtless be invented as experience teaches, and Mr. Swan is of opinion that the use of gill nets, sunk in

the deep water and anchored near the bottom by some ingenious mode of procedure which I do not clearly apprehend, will be found effective, as it has, I understand, been found effective elsewhere in the capture of other varieties of fish.

18. The coal-fish, or "black cod," is not confined solely to the waters around the island of Queen Charlotte, but is now known, or assumed, to abound at various points along the outer shore of Vancouver Island and as far south as Cape Flattery, as well as in the deep waters of the Strait of Fuca.

19. I think it unquestionable, that the capture and curing of these fish for exportation will soon form a very important industry, Mr. Swan is sanguine as to the effective use of deep-set gill-nets before mentioned, which, it appears, is already in use in the eastern cod-fisheries. He adds that he has "written to Prof. Baird for further information, and suggested that some of the eastern experts come out here (to Washington Territory) and teach our people the use of the gill-net."

20. In paragraph seven of my last year's report; I mentioned the successful issue of the proceedings of the Skidegate Oil Company in the extraction and refinement of the dog-fish oil, so largely produced in various parts of the Provincial coast waters. I now epitomise, from a document which has been handed to me by the agents of this enterprising firm, serving to show the importance of the large industry that has been created, and the possibility, under favorable circumstances, of its practically unlimited extension:

There is no perceptible diminution in the quantity of fish. We took 400,000 in a little over four months, 1883." (N. B. — This gives an average of one gallon of refined oil from the livers of ten fish, 40,000 gallons having been extracted, all of which was packed for market in new cans and cases, like coal oil.) Employed ten white men; the rest all Indian labor. We treat the Indians the same as the white men, and pay them the same prices; hence they are peaceable and work well. \* \* \* We find a market for a limited quantity in China and Honolulu; but taking this into account, and after supplying the local demand in British Columbia, the bulk of our product must find a market in the United States. We obtained the silver medal at Portland (Oregon) Mechanics' Fair for our oil. This was the highest prize for any exhibit. \* \* \* British Columbia not having been admitted to share the privileges of the Washington Treaty, our oil is subjected to the United States duty, which was this year raised to 25 per cent. *ad valorem*. This enormous duty cripples our industry very much; and should the United States further increase the duty we shall be deprived of a market in that direction, and unless further unforeseen demand arise elsewhere to compensate for the possible exclusion, we shall probably have to abandon our enterprise.

21. Accompanying this representation, by the Skidegate Oil Company, is the copy of a testimonial, officially handed to their representative at the Mechanics' Fair at Portland (1883), conveying the highest expression of praise of the Skidegate refined oil as a lubricant. It had been submitted to the "severest possible test, at the highest possible speed of machinery," and had given the most complete satisfaction. "In no instance has there been any indication of gumming; no heated journals; no offensive smell; it has lasting properties, and is in every respect a first-class article for any kind of machinery." This flattering testimonial, thus publicly given, is witnessed through their agents by Messrs. John Honeyman & Co., of the City Foundry, Portland; Messrs. Whitney & Marshall, of San Francisco; Westing-