



At once the most extensive industry of its kind in the world and the least familiar to even our own Canadian people; at once one of the most interesting and one of the least understood of our national occupations; at once the oldest in point of time and probably the most immature of all our major Canadian industries when regard is had to its enormous possibilities of expansion—such is the present-day fishing industry of the Dominion of Canada.

Fishing the Oldest Canadian Industry

If the average Canadian were asked which is the longest established of Canadian industries, he would probably hesitate between agriculture and fur-trading. But basic and thoroughly grounded as is Canadian farming, and old as is Canadian fur-trading, both take rank after the Canadian fishery in sequence of origin. Of all occupations actively pursued by the Canadian people, fishing is the oldest by some centuries' margin. It links the Canada of to-day with the Canada of very remote times. In fact, strange as may seem the statement, fishing in Canadian waters long antedated Canada itself.

It is well established that as early as the twelfth century, two hundred years before Columbus discovered America, hardy Basque and Norse fishermen were faring forth in their small unwieldy boats as far west as Iceland. Many historical authorities maintain, and with good show of reason, that these bold navigators visited and pursued their vocation off the rugged coasts of what is now known as Newfoundland and upon the border-lands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Certain it is that in the fifteenth century, following the discovery of the coast of Labrador by the Cabots in 1497, English fishermen with characteristic enterprise at once extended their operations as far as the shores of Newfoundland, the Maritime Provinces and

the State of Maine. Indeed, the first and chief result of the discovery of North America was the immediate establishment of a great cod fishery on the now world-famous banks of Newfoundland. Thus fishing has been quite certainly pursued in Canada for more than four hundred years; quite probably it had been carried on for two centuries earlier. To Canadian fishing, therefore, attaches the dignity of being the oldest present-day Canadian industry.

Canadian Fisheries Lead the World

Comparing the Canadian fisheries of to-day with those of other countries, they are found to be in many notable respects the most important and extensive of all. Disregarding entirely the admitted supremacy of Canadian fresh-water lakes, pools and streams as a sportsman's paradise, it can be said without exaggeration that in the great fishing-banks adjacent to her own territorial waters, as in her own proper coast and inland waters, Canada possesses the most extensive commercial fisheries in the world. It is safe to add that the waters in and about Canada teem with the principal commercial food fishes in quality unsurpassed and in quantity unequalled by the fishing waters of any country on the face of the earth. Upon the Western coast of British Columbia is carried on the richest and largest halibut industry and one of the most extensive salmon fisheries in the world. Off the shores of the Maritime Provinces is operated the world's greatest lobster fishery. Here, too, are natural producing oyster-beds as large in area as New York State, on which 2000 men find a permanent livelihood and \$6,000,000 capital is permanently invested. When to these statements is added the further fact that under the enterprising supervision of the Canadian Government there is operated throughout Canada what is probably the most extensive fish-breeding service conducted by any one government, it is at once evident that in her fisheries Canada possesses very sufficient grounds for just national pride.