27th January 1920.

Mr B. W. Heyer,

C. B. Financial Times,

City.

Dear Sir;-

In accordance with your recent request I enclose herewith a memorandum of my views re Mr Sloan's proposal re the salmon industry of this Province. I trust this will give you the information you desired.

Yours truly

HD/P.

The casual reader of Mr Sloan's proposal that the Government should take over and administer the salmon fisheries of British Columbia might conclude the policy advocated was wise and statesmanlike. Government operation of our natural resources, be they fish or otherwise, theoretically should be better and more economically administered since it eliminates competition, and does away with the unnecessary duplication of expenditure which competition engenders But theory and practice are often diametrically opposed and no where is this more apparent than with our public servants. What Government managed industry in Canada can show operating costs that would compare favourably with private enterprises of a similar nature ? A comparison would be equally odious as regards efficieny maintenance; and no Government service offers its employees the same incentive for proving their worth as is found in any private industrial enterprize. Doubtless political influences are largely responsible for this state of affairs. Men who, in private enterprize exercise the highest type of business ability; sound in judgement; quick in decision; and leaders amongst their business associates, cast all these advantages aside when accepting public office. Their policy becomes weak and vacillating; their judgement is influenced by what they fear their supporters may think; decision does not abide in them; and inefficiency and lack of method, which they would never tolerate in their private affairs, becomes the guiding rule of conduct in their services for the public.

In this particular matter of MrbSloan's proposal there is nothing to indicate any departure from the recognized system of governmental conduction of business affairs. For 40 odd years the Dominion Government has enacted and enforced laws for the maintenance of the salmon industry and not only have their methods failed of success, but this failure is the very cause of Mr Sloan's proposal. What warrant has he for expecting successful operations in the future from those whose past and present actions he so severely condemns in his memorandum of protest to the Minister of Marine & Fisheries ?

Mr Sloan intimates that should the Dominion authorities be unwilling to operate our salmon fisheries as a governmental undertaking, the Provincial Government would gladly assume the burden. But we have no more reason to expect satisfactory results from one than from the other. One of the chief provincial undertakings that had for its obhect the preservation of our salmon was the construction of the Seaton Lake hatchery. Even in that a grave mistake was made in locating the hatchery where it is, and despite the continued depletion of the Fraser sockeye fishery the Seaton Lake hatchery has failed to operate during many of the years since it was established. Does this indicate a special fitness on their part to now assume full charge of the industry ?

There is nothing new or constructive in the line of action advocated by Mr Sloan. All he proposes is that one operator - the Government - shall replace the many private operators; thereby decreasing production costs with a possible corresponding reduction

in selling values; and that through restricted fishing the drain on the fish would not be as severe as under existing conditions. There is nothing in the whole memorandum to show the Provincial Government has any idea of building up the industry by operating hatcheries, clearing obstructions in spawning streams, and in otherwise assisting nature to increase the supply. On the contrary Mr Sloan expressly states "All that is necessary to maintain our salmon-supply is to ensure that a sufficient number of fish reach the spawning grounds. If the beds are well seeded there will be a certain return. The fish will do all the work necessary, provided the Government gives them a chance to do so. They will perpetuate themselves without cost." This statement is not borne out by the facts; freshets and other catastrophes cause losses after the grounds have been amply seeded, and restricted fishing alone will not offset the depletions thus occasioned. Salmon are provided with the necessary quantity of eggs to maintain their place in marine life despite the depredations of their natural enemies. Commercial fishing is simply an additional cause of destruction not provided for in the original scheme of things, and the toll it exacts can only be compensated for by increasing Nature's maximum production. To operate our fisheries on a restricted basis may defer, but will not prevent extirmination.

While Mr Sloan's proposal does not meet with the support or approval of those possessing a knowledge of, or experience in, the salmon fisheries, the Provincial Department of Fisheries must be credited with more accomplishments in its work than can be shown by any other department of either the Provincial or Dominion Governments. To Mr Babcock is largely due the credit for securing the services of Dr Gilbert, Mr Thompson, and Mr Stafford in the study of the life history of our fishes, and his own painstaking and energetic accomplishments are entitle to all praise. To his efforts are largely due the building of the fish ways at Quesnelle Dam and Nedziaden Lake, as well as the clearing out of the Hell Gate slides in 1913. If the Provincial Government gives him in future the same support in such matters as they have done in the past they will accomplish more toward perpetuating the salmon industry than could ever be looked for under the policy of government operation which Mr Sloan proposed.