February 6th, 1918

H.B.Thomson, Esq.,

Food Controller,

Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Thomson:-

In war times economy should be one of our first considerations - especially where the Food Controller is concerned - and for this reason I did not go to the expense of telegraphing the Government my congratulations on securing you as the head of its Conservation Department. I thought instead I would ask you to convey to the "powers that be" my felicitations on their foresight and good judgment, and to assure them (for me) that they have the right man in the right place. Anyone who knows the game from cattle rustling in Cariboo to fighting patronage hogs at Victoria should be well qualified to handle every phase of the beef and bacon situation. And one who has so eloquently argued against prohibition as you did should be able to convince almost any kind of a profiteer to loosen up.

I presume one of the questions you will be called upon to deal with will be the regulating of prices both as to raw materials and the finished products. I understand in the U.S. this work has already been undertaken by their Food Conservation Department and representatives of the Government have acted as umpires between producers and middlemen as to

the fixing of fair and equitable prices for raw materials. Later on these same parties are to set selling prices for the finished products.

In some industries which may be classed as "seasonal", it is necessary that these price adjustments be arranged without delay. For example the sardine fishing in California is now in full operation and the U.S.government a month ago had their representative meet representatives of the fishermen and packers and after arguments pro and con had been submitted he fixed $15. per ton as the price fishermen were to receive for their catches.

I candidly believe some such method should be employed to regulate the salmon fishing industry of this province, and if this is done action should be taken immediate-ly to set prices for the raw fish. Not only is the season almost at hand but after the failure of the Fraser sockeye fishing last season became an assured fact selling values of the canned product rose to fabulous figures, with the result that both canners and fishermen anticipate a continuance of these high values for 1918 and if left to themselves will regulate the price of the raw fish accordingly. If your Department took the matter in hand promptly and set prices to be paid fishermen at a fair and reasonable basis, you could effect a considerable reduction in the selling price of the finished product. This would mean cheaper food. Without the matter being independently controlled, however, nothing can be accomplished as the selfish interests of canners

and fishermen alike incapacitates them for settling such a question by themselves.

I would therefore urge you to deal with this matter in your official capacity, and to again impress on you the advisability of early action on account of the near approach of the fishing season. The interests I represent put up the second largest pack in the province last season and we would welcome such action on your part. I will be pleased to supplement this suggestion with anything further you may desire, and trust you will not hesitate to call upon my services if needed.

Wishing you every success in your new undertaking, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

HD/H