January 11th, 1916

Hon. H.C.Brewster,

Victoria,

B.C.

Dear Mr. Brewster:-

It was my intention to have a talk with you before this, but unfortunately I had to go east the first of December, and now that I have returned, find that you are away yourself. I therefore am writing about the subject I wished to bring up with you, so that you will have it before you when you return.

As a fellow canneryman, you will appreciate the work that has been done by the Provincial Fishery Department in the last few years. I refer more particularly to the very valuable investigations that have been undertaken by Dr. Gilbert and Mr. Thompson. Perhaps, situated as you are at Clayoquot, you have not been thrown as much in touch with Dr. Gilbert's work as I have in northern British Columbia, and therefore may not appreciate as fully what he has accomplished and what yet remains to be done.

As regards the Fraser River, it would be a calamity if Dr. Gilbert was not permitted to make an investigation in 1917 to complete his work for that district so as to

embrace a cycle of two big years in order to obtain in 1917 a corroboration of the opinion he formed from his work in 1913. It is of still more importance that his work in northern British Columbia should be continued, since not only did his investigations there start later than in the Fraser River district, but the average life of sockeye salmon at Rivers Inlet, Skeena, and the Naas, appears to be five years, and therefore it is necessary that investigations in those districts should be carried on for a longer period than might be required in the case of the four year old fish of the Fraser. In addition to the large rivers of the north, Dr. Gilbert's investigations have been directed toward the smaller streams, some of which carry fish that mature in three years. His work in this direction is not yet complete and I would strongly urge upon you the advisability of permitting him to complete his labors, and the great harm it would do if he was interrupted even for one year, as the complete chain of his investigation would probably be broken.

I might say that Dr. Gilbert's works have been so appreciated by his own Government, I understand they are endeavoring to persuade him to undertake an investigation of Alaskan fisheries upon the same lines he has been working for us, but it would be a great pity if he started in on this new work before completing that which he has already been engaged on.

In regard to Mr. Thompson's work, as you are not directly interested in the halibut fishing it is possible

you would not appreciate the great value his work is, and what a light it is throwing upon this section of the fishing industry. Already his investigations have resulted in a knowledge of halibut life that far surpasses anything before known, despite the number of years the halibut fisheries of the Atlantic have been under observation. It would, in its way, be quite as disastrous to interrupt Mr. Thompson's labor as to permit Dr. Gilbert to leave us, and I sincerely hope that both of these gentlemen will be retained until their work is done.

In this connection, I would also point out that the whole conception of these investigations, as well as the study of other branches of the fishing industry, is to be credited wholly to Mr. Babcock. There have been rumours reach me of a possibility of the Government dispensing with his services, and it is largely on this account that I am writing this present letter.

As you are aware, Mr. Babcock and myself held very different views as regards the salmon fishery of the Fraser River, and I fought as hard as I could (and I am glad to say successfully) against his proposal to close the Fraser River for a period of years for sockeye fishing. During his first term of office in connection with the Provincial Fisheries, I did not agree at all with his ideas or policy, and am free to confess that at that time I would have backed up any proposition which would have resulted in taking the administration of our fisheries out of his hands. It is

a poor individual, however, who is not man enough to change his opinion, and in this respect I think that both Mr. Babcock and myself have had occasion to alter our views since the time of our old disagreement. Mr. Babcock, I am sure, has changed his opinion regarding the necessity of the drastic measures he proposed concerning the sockeye fishery of the Fraser, while I have unquestionably changed mine as to the value of the work he is doing.

Since his appointment as Assistant to the Commissioner, Mr. Babcock has done more valuable work for our fisheries than any other Government in the world has done for theirs during the past twenty-five years, and he has still further investigation in mind that, if he is allowed to carry into effect, will result in the upbuilding of our fishing industry to an extent which very few dream of at the present moment. To him is due the credit of securing the services of the eminent investigators who have been studying the question of salmon, halibut, and oyster life, and he has had under contemplation a similar investigation regarding herring. This latter, to my mind, is more important than all the rest of them put together, as I am of the opinion that the canning and salting of herring on this coast will within a few years represent a value greater than all of our combined fisheries do at the present time. The only drawback to the immediate development of this trade is our utter lack of knowledge of the sea habitat of herring, and until investigations are

made which will disclose this information, we cannot secure herring in the same prime condition that they are secured in the North Sea. Though the herring fisheries of Scotland, Holland and Norway, are of enormous extent and value, I think that British Columbia in the next twenty-five years would prove a formidable rival to them provided we were shown by Government investigation where we could obtain the fish when they are in their primest condition; and I believe that if Mr. Babcock is permitted to continue his work as Assistant to the Commissioner until he can have made a thorough investigation of the herring, that the value of his services to the Province will be beyond computation.

I must apologize for the length of this letter, but the subject is so important that I thought it was better to go into matters at full length rather than that you might possibly come to an adverse judgment through lack of full details of the situation.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

HD/N