

L. Barker, B. C.

20th October 1926.

A. E. Melius Jarvis, Esq.,

Toronto.

Dear Jarvis:-

I am in receipt of yours of the 12th inst.

Enclosed herewith are two newspaper clippings re personnel of proposed Canadian representatives of the International Commission. The Victoria despatch was evidently inspired and tends to show that a strenuous effort will be made by the Provincial government to have Babcock named as one of the commissioners. Doubtless you will hear direct from Whitehead the result of the canners interview with the Victoria authorities.

In former letters I made my position clear as to participating in the work of the proposed commission, consequently I need not elaborate further on it in this letter. As to your present suggestion of Barker as a member I think it would be a very serious mistake. I understand the Treaty provides for the Commission to function for a 15 year period, and, as mentioned previously, it would be a pity if the commissioners appointed did not continue in office for at least four years so the plans they initiate could be carried through a full cycle of salmon life. Barker is over 73 years old, is in poor health, and it is doubtful if he lives long enough to see such a cycle through. Furthermore, as you yourself mentioned to me, he lives in the past and is too conservative minded to cope successfully with problems of the future.

Barker has never been a strong advocate of artificial propagation. I consider that with the Nimpkish hatchery he had the finest chance of any man on the Pacific Coast to build up a great fishery and he practically wasted his opportunity. Properly operated the Nimpkish hatchery should have established a run to that lake that would have produced at least 50,000 cases of sockeyes annually, while all it accomplished has been to but little more than maintain the normal condition.

Barker as a director of the Columbia River Packers Association knew how artificial propagation had restored the Columbia river fishery. He knew that the canners there felt so satisfied with what was being accomplished that they voluntarily augmented by private subscriptions the funds appropriated by the government for hatchery work, and that his own company was one of the largest contributors. And yet in spite of what new methods were accomplishing there he made no attempt to introduce them in his Nimpkish operations.

In general his idea has been to devote most attention to destroying the natural enemies of salmon on the spawning beds. This is an excellent thing to do to make room for and protect the salmon in their fresh water life, but it will not restore runs which have practically become extinct. Artificial propagation must be employed to do the latter work, and on Fraser river must be employed on a very extensive scale since the spawning area is so vast and the depletion has been so great. Barker no longer possesses the necessary vision, nor the necessary energy for such a vast undertaking. In earlier letters I suggested Whitehead to represent the cannery as your company is the largest operator, but if he is unwilling to act then I would say either Hager or Bob Gosse would make excellent commissioners.

On the Columbia river sockeye eggs, shipped down from Alaska, were artificially propagated under the modern system, and before being liberated a number of the young fish were marked by the removal of certain fins. When the fish of the first liberation returned as adults their progeny were likewise marked before being released, but different fins were removed so as to distinguish them from other sockeyes. This year out of 50,000 second generation fish marked 2,300, or 4-2/5%, were captured and identified, while of 100,000 first generation fish marked 2,500, or 2 1/2%, were recovered. As naturally all marked fish were not reported to the authorities the actual percentage of return would be still greater. Under natural propagation only 1/10th of 1% reach maturity so the result of proper artificial propagation is proven to be at least 25 to 50 times greater than nature unassisted can be expected to produce.

For the past few years, under Motherwell's supervision, artificial propagation under the newer methods has been extensively carried on in the lower tributaries of Fraser river, where the late running sockeyes have their spawning beds. I consider that the present season's late run is directly attributable to this hatchery work, and is an indication of what can be accomplished with the upper Fraser river runs if similar methods are employed in their spawning areas.

The late run on Fraser river this year increased the expected pack by at least 50,000 cases. If the International Commission carry out similar propagation work in the upper sections of the river, and at the same time make room for the resultant output by exterminating natural enemies, I can see no reason why the Fraser salmon industry cannot be restored to its former affluence by the fifth year of the commission's functioning. What has actually been done elsewhere, and on the lower Fraser itself, can be repeated in its upper waters, and surely the prospect warrants both immediate action and the employment of men more energetic, ambitious, and of greater physical ability than our old friend Barker.

I quite realize that my reflections on Barker may be taken as the customary jealousy of one canneryman by a competitive one. But I can assure you I am animated by no such motive. The restoration of the Fraser sockeye fishery is something I have advocated in season and out of season for the past 25 years. There have been others who spasmodically did likewise but generally, and on the whole, I have played a lone hand. Now that at last some action seems likely I would hate to see the work jeopardized by a weak, inefficient, or ignorant and biased board of commissioners. This was my sole object in opposing Found and Babcock as members and is also my only reason for objecting to Barker.

I do not know if you have read the report of Mr. R. E. Clanton on the Fraser river situation. Mr. Clanton is the Master Fish Warden for the State of Oregon, and it has been under him the propagation work on Columbia river has been so successful. In 1921 I persuaded the Puget Sound and Fraser river canners to contribute the necessary funds to have Clanton examine the Fraser river spawning areas and make recommendations for restoring the sockeye fishery. The report referred to was the result of his visit, but while the fishing interests approved of his recommendations the position assumed by the Dominion government prevented action being taken thereon.

Clanton as a practical hatchery worker knew his subject and what was needed to be done, but report writing was not his strong point, nor was he familiar with the arguments previously advanced, which had to be combated, nor the prejudices that had to be overcome. These latter points all had to be dealt with, and to me fell that share of the work. His report therefore is really my argument superimposed on his practical findings and the whole endorsed by him. I need therefore say nothing further as to my views than to suggest your reading the report referred to. It covers the situation pretty fully, shows the returns that can be expected, and, I think, emphasizes the necessity of broad minded, active commissioners who would be willing to forget and forego their pet hobbies in an effort to accomplish the greatest possible good without working unnecessary hardships on any existing commercial interests.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely