

11th January 1921.

F. P. Kendall, Esq.,

Portland, Ore.

Dear Mr Kendall:-

I have carefully considered your letter of the 8th inst., relative to a closed season for the Fraser sockeye fishery for 1921, and possibly for a longer period, but I cannot see any chance of its accomplishment, and as I am leaving for the East on Thursday I will not be available for Olympia while the legislature is in session. Furthermore while closing down would undoubtedly give natural propagation a better chance, the history of the industry shows the benefits to be expected would be infinitesimal. The money and energy expended in forcing through such legislation would, in my opinion, bring much greater benefits if expended in building up the fishery by artificial propagation.

This closing of the sockeye fishery has been a bone of contention in British Columbia for 15 years past. It was suggested by the Provincial government; fought for by a majority of the canners; and endorsed by the Dominion government officials, but was invariably defeated through the force of public opinion. The principal reason for the public attitude is the fact that in Canadian waters the Fraser sockeye fishery is entirely in the hands of gill netters, of whom 90% own their own boats and nets, and all their boats are operated by gasoline engine power. Owing to the opposition of cannery owners the use of gasoline boats is not permitted in Northern B. C. waters for gill net fishing, consequently closing the Fraser fishery while refusing fishermen permission to utilize their investment elsewhere, would in effect mean confiscation of the capital they had invested in boats and equipment. Of Fraser river cannery owners 80% have other plants in localities not affected by closing the Fraser fishery, so their loss would not be great, but such action would unquestionably work a hardship on the fishermen and individual cannery owners of Fraser district, and therefore all past closure attempts have been defeated.

I have had exceptional opportunities for securing information and have given many years of study to the Fraser sockeye fishery. I feel it is not egotism on my part when I claim a more intimate knowledge of the subject than anyone else possesses. The deeper my study, and the more I learn of artificial propagation accomplishments elsewhere, the stronger becomes my conviction that re-building depleted fisheries by natural propagation is impossible, while it can be done, and that quickly, if artificial propagation is employed.

Records in my possession going back to 1806 show

that there were some sockeyes every year in the "upper" Fraser watershed, but that at least two years out of every four were recognized failures over 100 years ago. Commercial fishing can hardly ~~have~~ be said to, have commenced for 60 or 70 years after these partial failures were known to exist, and yet, with no commercial drain to interfere, natural propagation failed to build up the depleted runs to an equality with those of the big years. Indeed the subsequent history of the fishery proved it did not build it up at all; the utmost it succeeded in doing being to ~~maintain~~ maintain a uniform average, until commercial operations took their toll.

The same situation prevails in other localities and with other species of salmon. As far as my knowledge goes, nowhere, and with no form of natural resources, has nature unassisted re-established what man has reduced. And in hardly any instance can it be shown that nature succeeded even where depletion was caused through catastrophes of its own making.

On the other hand even the inefficient method of turning out in their fry stage young salmon artificially propagated, has built up the Sacramento river from a point perilously near extinction until its present runs approximate, if they do not exceed, its best performances under natural conditions. Similar artificial methods undoubtedly have helped maintain - but not increase - many of the fisheries of Oregon, Washington and B. C., including Fraser and Columbia rivers. I fully believe that despite its inferiority to the rearing pond system, the old methods have done far more good than would have been accomplished by absolutely closing any area to all commercial fishing.

What you have accomplished in Oregon with your rearing pond system can undoubtedly be done in other localities as well. My aim has been to educate the public on this subject until they demand action be taken along proper lines. I think this policy is beginning to produce satisfactory results. In the matter of the Fraser sockeye fishery you know how receptive the local public and those directly interested have proven. I enclose herewith copy of a letter just received from the Dominion Fisheries Department at Ottawa which shows they are equally favourable.

In the January number of the Pacific Fisherman I expect they will produce a paper I sent them on "Business Management in the Salmon Canning Industry". This deals largely with the very problem under discussion. In it I have endeavoured to show that it will pay all interests much better to forget their private animosities and unite in devoting to artificial propagation the time and money they now spend in trying to legislate each other out of business. You know much better than I do what it costs per 1000 to hatch and rear young salmon. You also have some idea of what it would cost to secure legislation closing Puget Sound and Fraser river to all fishing - and to keep it closed if such legislation was passed. I am sure you will agree with me that the thousands of dollars spent in such fighting would hatch out and maintain

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until their fingerling stage many million of young sockeye. I am also satisfied you will agree that such money so spent would produce a far greater return of mature fish in 1925 than - based on past accomplishments - could possibly be expected from natural propagation if no fishing were permitted in 1921.

As regards securing eggs for our proposed undertaking we have nothing to fear. For the past four years the run of sockeyes to the Harrison-Lillooet watershed has been large enough to provide all Fraser hatcheries with their egg requirements and still leave enough for the natural spawning beds. From Mr Found's letter you can see that eggs from this district will be obtainable each year of the cycle. Furthermore, when discussing this matter with Mr. O'Malley, in Seattle, last November he told me he would undertake to supply from Alaska all the eggs we could use, provided a local supply was unobtainable in any season.

With kindest regards, and thanking you for writing me on this subject,

Yours sincerely

HD/P.