

PROVINCIAL FISH COMMISSIONS.

Over 50 years ago the State of Massachusetts realized that to obtain best results it was advisable to put its fisheries under the control of a commission. The success met with was so pronounced that other states shortly adopted the plan until to-day practically every state in the Union has its local board of commissioners.

Under the local commission form of administration it was found more attention was given to the protection and development of this natural resource; greater efforts made to re-stock depleted areas; more encouragement given to private enterprise, such as trout farming operations; and greater knowledge was obtained of fishing streams and how they could be made more productive.

Where the territory is of vast extent, and where those responsible for fishery protection have a multitude of other matters occupying their attention, the same care and consideration is not possible as could be secured when fishery administration is divorced from all other interests and placed under the complete control of those familiar with local conditions.

One of the functions of a fish commission is to secure eggs of trout and other game fishes and hatch them in suitable localities. After the egg sac has been absorbed the young fry are sold to stock privately owned streams and ponds. In the U. S. there is a large and constantly growing demand for game fish fry, and naturally many of the applicants lack the necessary knowledge of properly caring for their purchases. It is for the commission to decide whether the waters intended to be used are suitable, and whether the young fish to be introduced will prove a benefit or detriment to the locality. Naturally such intimate supervision is not possible unless each province has its own local commission, familiar with the waters under its jurisdiction, and readily accessible for guidance and advice to those requiring instruction.

It can readily be seen that if one central authority controlled the fish culture and distribution of the entire Dominion those districts farthest from the seat of control would not receive the same attention that nearer and more thickly populated sections would receive. Neither would such central authority learn as quickly the needs of isolated districts, nor provide as well for an adequate distribution of suitable game fish fry.

Trout farming is an industry that has assumed large proportions in many of the eastern states as well as in the province of Ontario. In the western states and provinces such enterprise has been of much slower growth owing to the local streams not having been so depleted of their natural stock. But the introduction of motor vehicles and the consequent betterment of roads all throughout the country, has greatly increased the facility by which distant trout streams are made accessible to the city angler. As a result such streams are being fished to an extent that threatens the extirmination of their game fishes. Unless something is done to offset this drain it is only a question of a short time before angling will become one of the lost arts.

