Reply to Vancouver, B. C. Sun editorial of 18th Decr.

The editorial on "Salmon Extirmination" which appeared in your issue of the 18th inst., contains many statements contrary to well established scientific facts. I would like to draw your attention to some of these misrepresentations.

The editorial writer claims "even on the basis of regulated and licensed fishing" salmon cannot be commercialized "without bringing about in a few years the extirmination of the salmon species". He then adds that this "is founded on a law of nature, applying to all kinds of animal life, bird life, and fish life, having fitness for human food."

That no such law of nature exists is manifested by the continuous increase in numbers of those domesticated animals, birds and fishes which are commercially produced and reared for human food requirements. As all domesticated animals are descended from stock originally wild, it follows that what is now accomplished under domestication must also have applied to those species in their wild state.

Another claim made is that if salmon are protected from commercial fishing, and can only be taken by anglers, or to a limited extent by gill netters, "we will have a high grade food supply which will recur and exist through the centuries."

This statement is directly contrary to the opinions of the most famous naturalists of the past century. It is a well established law that if one inhabitant of a given area has its place in nature adversely disturbed, be the destruction ever so little, it will decrease in numbers, and other species will supplant it. This fact is clearly evidended by the practical extirmination of trout life in our adjacent streams, even though these fish "are placed on the protected list, and only permitted to be caught with sporting tackle."

Whether it be animal, bird or fish life, if protection is not afforded against natural enemies, and if sufficient food is not available to sustain the species, extirmination is bound to follow. Conversely where such protection and an ample food supply are furnished the saving of natural wastage is great enough to permit an enormous percentage to be used for human food requirements, and still permit an annual increase in the species. In this respect your editorial of the 19th inst., on the "World's Egg Basket", refutes the arguments used in the editorial on "Salmon Extirmination". Therein you show that nearly 3 million surplus chickens are sold for food purposes without impairing the stock of six million egg producers. Thus through protection from enemies, and a sufficiency of food, 33-1/3% of natural losses are converted into a food supply for mankind.

It is a remarkable fact that scientists and fishery administrators of almost every country regard restrictions on fishing operations as the panacea for all fish extirmination problemns. No matter what the species affected may be, they claim limitation of the catch as the one thing needful. But a realization of the fact that only 1/10th of 1%, or less,

are affected by our commercial catch demonstrates that too much importance is attached to diminishment from this cause. It might just as well be argued that our agricultural croppings, carried on as extensively as they are to-day, will eventually result in destroying the supply. We know on the contrary that under modern methods the yield of farm products is constantly increasing. We protect cattle, sheep, pigs and barnyard fowl by extirminating wolves, coyotes, and other natural enemies; we supply them with food to prevent losses through under nourishment or actual starvation; and we have carried artificial propagation in respect to them to a far higher scientific level than anything we have as yet accomplished with fishes. We do not institute laws for closed seasons as to time, or regulate to prevent excessive killing of these animals, and yet, for human food requirements, we annually slaughter from 25% to 50% of the natural production, and still domestic animals are increasing in numbers. We obtain our needs, not by reducing the breeding percentage, but by savings effected from natural waste. It is only reasonable to suppose that like results will be secured from water farming when we cease to worry about how many fish we catch, and instead devote our energies to finding out and overcoming the causes of destruction of the eggs and young of our fishes.

Our fishery administrators and so called experts should take to heart the advice given by Mr. Fred. Mather, one of the most prominent fishculturists the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries produced. After 30 years experience - which exceeds that of any of our Canadian authorities - Mr. Mather said;-
"I remember one of my school teachers laid down the notable maxim, "when you are in doubt play a trump". Our fishery doctors are of the same mind as my teacher. They are - or at any rate ought to be - very much in doubt, and yet they continually want to play trumps in the shape of stringent regulations and restrictions. If I might tender a piece of advice, I would say - don't."