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GR 045
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File 6

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM TO THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL PLANNING.

THE COMMERCIAL FISHERIES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Jurisdiction.

When British Columbia entered into the Union of the Provinces under the B. N. A. Act, the Dominion of Canada undertook to assume the protection and encouragement of the fisheries and to defray the expenses of same. These fisheries were largely an unknown entity at that time. The Province of British Columbia, by the terms of union, thus relinquished control of one of its most important natural resources. Whether the result of this loss of control has been in the best interest of British Columbia is debatable and need not be argued here but it might be well to point out that the development of British Columbia's fisheries has taken place largely from the standpoint of the national economy, rather than from the standpoint of what the effect of such development might be on the more restricted regional economy. As the dominant national economic interests are largely centered in eastern Canada, the development of British Columbia's fisheries from that standpoint has not always been in the best interests of the Province's fisheries. As an example, attention might be directed to the Fraser River salmon fishery which deteriorated very largely on account of a partial blockade on the Fraser River, due to the building of the Canadian National Railway. Had the control of its fisheries rested in Provincial authority, there is no doubt but what sufficient pressure could have been exercised to have had the obstruction removed before such extensive damage had been wrought.

The halibut fishery of Hecate Strait and Dixon Entrance rightfully

values are, in many cases, quite high and reflect the influence of the war and high prices generally. It should also be mentioned that the figures representing the quantity of fish caught and landed are the amounts of raw fish as landed by the fishermen and do not take into consideration the waste which occurs in converting the raw fish into the finished product. On the other hand, the figures representing marketed value represent the amounts actually received, not by the fishermen, but by the freezer, canner, or other processor.

Fishing Licences

Under the Special Fishery Regulations for British Columbia, which regulations are made by Federal Order-in-Council under the authority of the Federal Fisheries Act, nearly every kind of fishing in British Columbia requires a licence (See copy of the Special Fishery Regulations for British Columbia appended hereto.) Table No. II shows the number and kind of fishing licences operated in British Columbia in 1941. It will be noted that no licence is required to fish halibut. Halibut vessels, however, are required to register with the International Fisheries Commission, as this Commission is responsible for the production and conservation of Pacific halibut under authority of a treaty between Canada and the United States.

In Table No. II it will be noted that the fourth column from the left is headed "Others." The numbers appearing under this heading refer to Japanese, while the next column headed "Jap-R.S." indicates Japanese returned soldiers who fought in the Canadian Army overseas in World War I. The totals appearing at the bottom of the columns in Table No. II indicate the number of licences issued but do not necessarily mean

that there were that many fishermen employed. In the case of white and Indian fishermen, these are allowed as many licences as they may desire. For instance, a man may operate a salmon gill-net for part of the season, go salmon-trolling for part of the season and later on may be engaged on a herring purse-seine. In that case he would be required to have three licences. This does not apply, however, in the case of licences to Japanese. Japanese, up until the end of the 1941 fishing season, were not permitted more than one kind of licence and before that licence was issued, the Japanese making application was required to be a British subject, either by birth or naturalization. The year 1941 was the last year in which Japanese engaged in fishing in British Columbia. So far as I am aware, there is no means of knowing the actual number of men engaged in fishing, as the Federal Department of Fisheries, which issues the licences, does not record the number of licences that may be issued to a fisherman. In the case of whites and Indians, because of the seasonal nature of much of the fishing in British Columbia, it is felt that quite a large number of fishermen hold more than one kind of licence.

Vessels & Boats

Table No. III shows the number of vessels and boats engaged in catching and landing British Columbia's fisheries production in 1941. Here again it is felt that there is reason to believe that some duplication occurs. It is known that some vessels fishing halibut in the early part of the season later change over to salmon fishing and some may even change again to the herring fishery in the winter time. Trolling boats very often troll for part of the season and then engage in gill-netting for a short time, later going back again to trolling. In the

TABLE NO. II.

TABLE SHOWING NUMBER AND KIND OF FISHING LICENCES
OPERATED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA - 1941

Variety of Licence	White	Indian	Others	Jap RS	Can- celled	TOTAL
Salmon Trap-net	5	---	---	---	---	5
Salmon Drag-seine,	---	9	---	---	---	9
Salmon Purse-seine,	282	50	---	---	1	333
Salmon Gill-net	3,005	1,469	913	48	67	5,502
Salmon Trolling,	2,426	481	155	2	17	3,081
Asst. Salmon Gill-net,	132	306	244	---	69	751
Capt. Salmon Seine,	120	116	---	---	4	240
Asst. Salmon Seine,	1,130	612	---	---	1	1,943
Cod,	239	39	153	---	20	451
Crab,	70	9	---	---	---	79
Grayfish,	357	121	419	---	1	898
Miscellaneous,	65	10	33	1	3	112
Small Dagger,	40	---	10	---	---	50
Smelt,	23	---	18	---	1	42
Pilchard Purse-seine,	31	---	---	---	---	31
Capt. Pilchard-seine	23	4	---	---	---	27
Asst. Pilchard-seine,	170	7	---	---	---	177
Herring Pound,	10	---	---	---	---	10
Herring Purse-seine,	57	---	1	---	---	58
Herring Gill-net,	19	---	8	---	---	27
Capt. Herring Seine	35	4	6	---	---	45
Asst. Herring Seine	538	89	92	---	---	519
Capt. Hal. boat for bait	9	---	1	---	---	10
Capt. Tuna Boat,	5	---	---	---	---	5
Asst. on Tuna Boat	6	---	---	---	---	6
Whaling permits	6	---	---	---	---	6
	8,603	3,526	2,053	51	184	14,417