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HALIBUT FISHERMEN HERE DECIDE FAVOR OF LONGER CLOSE SEASON AND WOULD PROTECT CHICKENS

on which to base findings on such regulations as would be required.

FLUCTUATION OF INDUSTRY

Whereas, the older banks south of Cape Omaney in 1910 had yielded practically the entire total of 53 million pounds landed that year, in 1926 they | had yielded but forty per cent of the total for that year. This was in spite of the fact that two-and-a-half times as much gear had been employed on these particular banks in 1926 as compared with 1910. In the past five years. the production of the area south of Cape Omaney had steadily decreased

had declined. fish had made it necessary for the the westward. Depleted banks, asserted been sustained fairly well. In 1913, the from the westward. At this juncture, Yakutat was a relatively new bank Mr. Thompson introduced one of the but, in 1926, the centre of operations principal points raised subsequently in right but the figures may serve to re-

DEPLETING BANKS

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Owing to continued ill-health, J. B. Miller, proprietor of the Mon-

WAS SO NERVOUS and SHORT OF BREATH COULD HARDLY SLEEP

Mrs. Louise Raglin, Golden Lake, Ont., writes: - "For several years I was greatly troubled with my heart. I was so nervous and short of breath I could hardly sleep at night, and if I did sleep for a while I had bad

"I told my

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clearly indicated the great fall in the as could be learned, they were not abundance of fish in the older banks, bolding up even on Portlock banks. In The production per skate of gear had 1923, the average per skate of gear was the female, nine pounds. On the nordropped in the past five years from 160 pounds whereas now, according to thern and western banks, the rate of 500 to 50 pounds. The only explanation | Shermen's own dates, it had dropped was that the fish were much scarcer to 100 pounds. In 1926, the average on particularly on the older banks and it the Hecate Straits banks was 50 pounds; required more gear and more work to on Yakutat, 80 pounds; on Portlock, btain the fish. All classes of the fish 100 pounds, and to the westward, from 100 to 130 pounds. The economic fac-Up to 1910, fishing was general in- tor was brought in by the greater cost, side Hecate Straits but the scarcity of through greater distance, of fishing to fishermen to move to deeper waters Mr. Thompson, could not be easily reoutside. As one bank became exhaust- plenished. The large, mature fish had d, another one hal been moved to and, almost disappeared in the Hecate Straits such means, the production had banks and they were not coming in to Portlock. Fishing his address-namely that one bank was fresh your minds. But you should take not replenished by another, that migra- care and you ought to set yourselves to tion apparently did not take place be- make the most of it." own feet," asserted Mr. Thompson. "We was a large decline in mediums and measures on another. Each fleet will coming scarcer and scarcer. Westward, have to bear its own burden." There the percentage of mature fish was ous condition on all the banks was fish now taken in Hecate Straits was

STRIKING RECORDS OF PAST

Records of the past were necessary to The spawning season was general from nor- would take three, four or perhaps five spit of Yakutat. The eggs were ferherly to the shoreline; thence following years to ascertain the effectiveness of tilized freely in the water and drifted

HABITS OF FISH

Speaking of the rates of growth of

varied on different banks. In Dixon's Entrance, a six year old male halibut | weighed four pounds and a female five pounds. A fourteen year old male weighed about 28 pounds and a female, 37 pounds. Twenty-five to forty year old male fish weighed from 60 to 80 pounds while females of this age weighed 120 pounds and up. The females grow much more rapidly than the males and virtually all "whales" over eighty Comparative figures per skate of gear newer banks to the westward? As far pounds in weight were female. An eight year old male Goose Island halibut would weigh around eight pounds and growth was slower, the Cook Inlet halibut being particularly slow. All this went to show that there could not be any great intermigration, particularly between the southern and western banks.

> It was five years after birth before the halibut entered the commercial class. Then it was a chicken for three years and a medium for eleven years. The average fish became mature for spawning at twelve years of age.

"If you take a baby chicken five years old and not wait until it is eight years old and three times the size, it is all

tween different banks, and that fish on On the more southerly banks, Mr. each had varying characteristics and Thompson said, the fish taken were habits. "Each area must stand on its becoming increasingly immature. There cannot save one by invoking restrictive even the large stray spawners were bewas evidence to show that the fishing greater, reaching 85 per cent on the was declining on all banks. The seri- Yakutat banks. The average age of the very evident. It was a striking case, ten years or less. "Thus you can easily proving itself, to place before the gov- realize that the fish are not being given a chance to mature."

SPAWN IN OPEN WATERS

fford guidance for the future. If the months of December to March. The protective regulations were to be de- males appeared first on the spawning vised, the knowledge of conditions as grounds and spawned first. Eggs were they now prevailed was essential. It laid freely in the waters say over the ment, and containing 3 acres, more or such measures as the close season. west where they were hatched. A ques-Mr. Thompson then turned to the bio- tion that had not yet been definitely logical studies that had been carried determined was how far the larvae acout by the commission. Commercial tually drifted. With such a drift of larvae westward, it followed that there must be a countermigration of adult fish eastward. Though investigations on he westward banks were not complete. there was enough information available to show that there was no great migration till the fish became of spawning size. Portlock and Yakutat fish might intermigrate, there was nothing sure about that, but it was practically certain that there was no migration from westward to southern banks.

The large female halibut carried three 28-pound fish would contain 300,000 eggs while a 100-pounder would have 1.500,000.

RACES OF HALIBUT

different races of fish, stated Hr. Thomp- done to build up spawning reserves on fish of the various banks did not in- mation and material at its command termingle, especially the fish of the west- and it had been gathered efficiently and ward and southern banks. There was with painstaking care. no question but that the southern and Mr. Found stated that, it additional western banks were independent.

Speaking of findings as a result tagging operations, Mr. Thompson stated that it had been found that the movment of the immature fish on the Hecate Straits banks averaged twent miles while the mature fish on the Yakutat banks travelled at an average of three hundred miles from the point where they were tagged to the point where they were caught. There were signs indicating that fish moved between the south and west banks. In any case it could be definitely said that there was little movement up to maturity.

ARTIFICIAL PROPAGATION

"You might as well forget it," stated Mr. Thompson in speaking of artificial propagation. Owing to the abundance of eggs, it would only take two or three mature halibut to fill a hatchery. The eggs would be placed in a jar but they would soon have to be released because they could not be fed artificially. Nothing would be saved by hatchery work Island. Massett and Cape Addington be little left for the fishermen. in connection with the halibut for the period of protection was too short,

done to meet a situation such as this. boats, make long trips to the westward

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RICHMOND'S "LOUVRE"

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He ventured to say that the supplementing of the present close season Isolation developed differences in the would prove beneficial. It also seemed bodies of men and so it was with the necessary that something should be son. The Cook Inlet fish was small the southern banks such as those of headed and fine having much different Hecate Straits. To meet with varying peculiarities from the Portlock fish. conditions on various banks and at There was not such a marked difference various points, new regulations would between fish on the various westward have to be flexible. It was a difficult banks but there were sharp differences situation and, while regulations would between the fish on the westward and have to be extensive, they would have southern banks. The size of the head to be applied with greatest care. In was one of the most clear-cut points concluding, Mr. Thompson asserted that of difference, this being illustrated on he was proud of the work that had charts and otherwise by Mr. Thompson, been done by his staff. The commis-

> nformation were desired, Mr. Thompson would be pleased to give it as far possible. He suggested that the audience ask any questions it desired. GENERAL DISCUSSION

J. M. Morrison, agent of the Deep Sea Fishermen's Union, inquired where the Hecate Straits fish disappeared during the winter, leaving in the fall and re-In reply, Mr. Thompson stated that,

while Hecate Straits halibut, might move to some unknown grounds during the winter, he was more inclined to the theory that they were merely not feeding and thus were not caught during Capt. David Ritchie of the Unome

it had been proposed in Ketchikan to

Mr. Found replied that the Timber grounds had been specified at Ketchi-

asserted Mr. Thompson In spite of the extension of the close season. By doing hooks and gear. Mr. Thompson, in incrase of gear, there was a great de- so, the smaller Prince Rupert boats reply, showed that the smaller hooks crease in the production of all banks. would not be seriously affected for they were the more damaging to all sizes of The total catch was steadily falling. generally ceased operations about the fish. Capt. Edwards felt that he might "I think you should give serious con- end of October. Capt. Morrison referred be favorable to the limiting of hooks to sideration to the advisability of trying to the fact that, owing to brokerage' larger sizes. something," declared the speaker, "and charges, duties, etc., it was almost pro- Capt. Dave Ritchie thought that catensive will have to be hibitive for Canadians to build large smaller hooks caught smaller fish. He

Dr. Alexander Wood

Smith Block Phone 575

and land catches at Alaskan ports. Capt. Johnson, operator of a three man boat, favored the extension of the close season as proposed. He favored protecting the small fish and would not permit of their being landed. He was not in favor of closing one bank and allowing another to remain open helped fishermen to build large boats. It was different here. Fishermen had to take what they could get in Hecate

Mr. Found pointed out that even the taking of small fish could not be continued indefinitely.

Capt. W. Doucett, American boat master, referred to the difference of views that would exist between operators of large and small boats. He urged that adequate surveys be made of the Pacific Coast fishing grounds as was done on the Atlantic coast.

Capt. John Hanson was favorably disposed to a size limit. The closing certain grounds might also be practicable. If it was necessary to let both hickens and "whales" go, there would

SIZE OF HOOKS

Capt. Charlie Edwards brought up "The need of regulations was acute," | Capt. Morrison spoke in favor of the the point of the use of various sized

(continued on page six)

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