

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

BEING THE

REPORTS

OF THE VARIOUS

**PUBLIC OFFICERS
DEPARTMENTS AND
INSTITUTIONS**

FOR THE TWO YEARS

JULY 1, 1922--JUNE 30, 1924

THIRD BIENNIAL
REPORT

OF THE

Commission of Sea
— and —
Shore Fisheries

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

1924

STATE OF MAINE

BIENNIAL REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF SEA AND SHORE FISHERIES

Rockland, Me.,

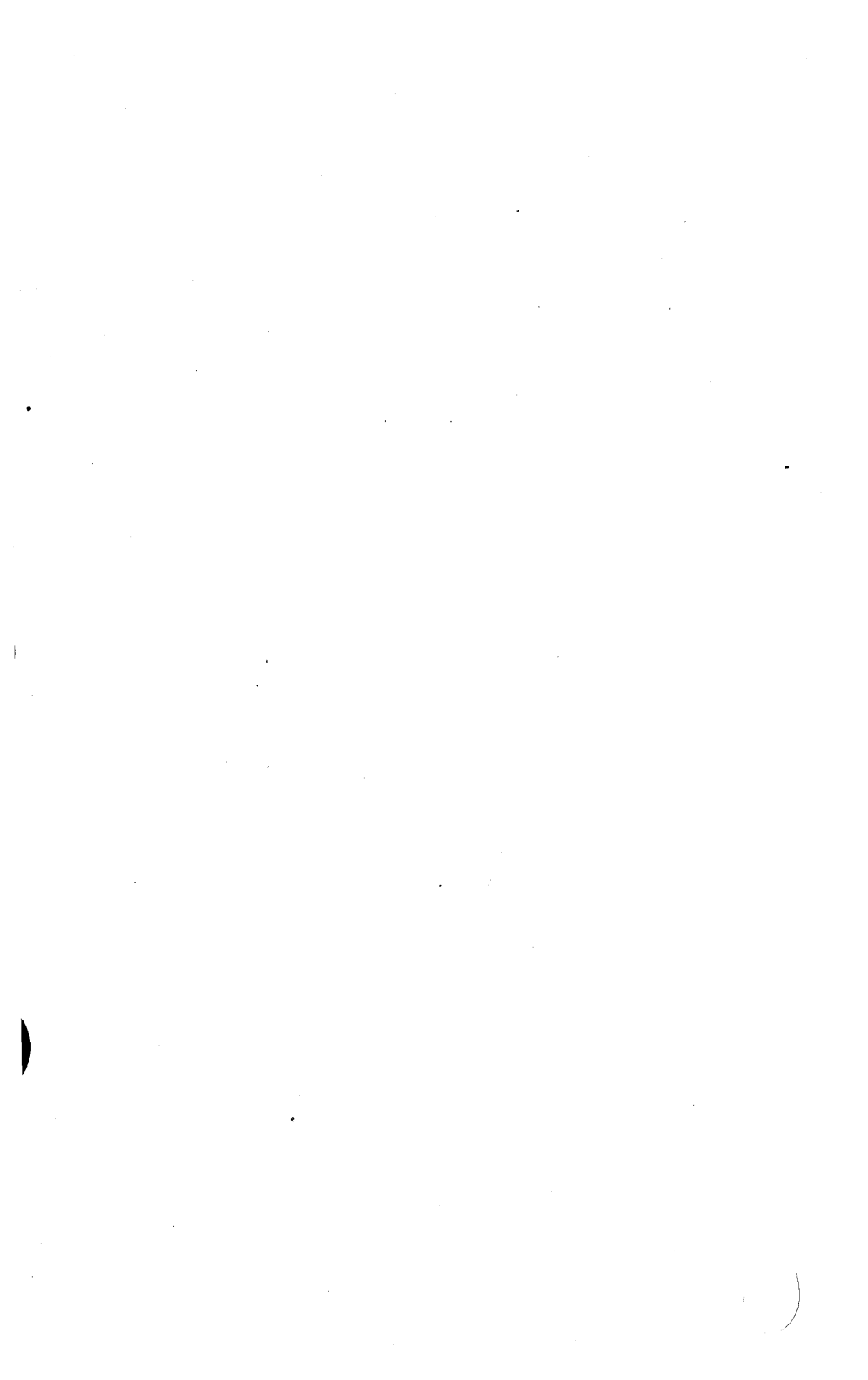
To the Honorable Governor and the Executive Council:

Sirs:—

We have the honor to transmit herewith, in compliance with the law, the report of H. D. Crie, Director of Sea and Shore Fisheries, for the year ending June 30, 1924, together with such additional statements as the Commission has made.

Fred B. Spear, Eastport,
Lynwood B. Thompson, Belfast,
COMMISSION.

By H. D. Crie,
Director.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1

SMELTS

The conditions are so varied along the coast that it is almost impossible to enact a general smelt law that will fit each locality and not be confusing to the reader. Experience has taught us that stringent special laws with adequate penalties would be the best way to deal with the smelt situation. The reliable smelt fishermen who believe in protection should be appointed wardens to serve without pay to protect the smelts in the spring when they enter the brooks to spawn and are taken by pleasure seekers who in many instances make no use whatever of them. This practice should be stopped as millions of parent fish laden with spawn and milt are destroyed annually.

2

SCALLOPS

After an extensive investigation, we believe that the scallop law should be amended, allowing the men to fish from November 1st to April 15th within the inland waters laid down by the Government during the war and to fish outside the inland waters the whole year.

Making this change will allow the fishermen through the summer months the right to fish on the outside grounds where there are apparently large beds of scallops.

3

LOBSTERS

We believe that many of the bays are the natural breeding places for the lobsters because investigation shows that approximately nine tenths of the lobsters taken from the head waters of the bays are large females often laden with many thousands of eggs and that very few small lobsters are caught, showing

that protection should be given parent lobsters in the bays by closing certain waters permanently for future breeding grounds.

Nearly every person in the state is vitally interested in the increase of the lobsters on the Maine Coast. Approximately eighteen thousand are interested from a business standpoint while the remainder of the inhabitants enjoy them because they are such a toothsome morsel. The man who said, "they were neither fish, fowl or good, red herring, but that they were delicious eating," did not get very far away from the truth because nearly everyone enjoys sitting down to a meal where lobsters are included in the menu.

The Commissioners are also interested in the increase of lobsters for the facts mentioned above and believe an experiment would be worthy of the money expended if a pound could be stocked with berried lobsters to remain until the young lobsters hatched; when hatched to be fed and cared for until they arrived at the bottom seeking stage. Such an experiment would not involve a large expenditure of money and might be of great value to the fisheries.

4

MACKEREL

This Commission feels that the time has arrived when the mackerel should have some protection. In 1886 there were 820 mackerel seining vessels fishing on the coast during the summer months and they caught and salted approximately 1,600,000 barrels of mackerel. By the year 1890 this large fleet had been reduced to approximately 10 vessels engaged in this industry and for twenty-five years thereafter mackerel were few and expensive in the markets.

For two seasons small mackerel have appeared in large schools and have been destroyed in almost every conceivable manner. If these small fish had been protected the amount of food they would have furnished in 1924 would have reduced the cost of living considerably and instead of weighing one quarter pound each they would have weighed one and one quarter pound each, an increase of 500 per cent in four years. Mackerel weighing less than one pound each should not be taken or offered for sale.

5

CLAMS

One of the best ways to increase the clams we believe is to enact laws giving individuals the right to control the clam flats. If a man owns one acre of flats he surely will cultivate and protect it. If people have a right to dig clams whenever and wherever they want to, the clams cannot be protected and another valuable inexpensive food supply will have been lost to the state.

Oysters and quahaugs were plentiful in the rivers and bays of Maine at one time but to-day they are nearly all gone and if the clams are not protected there will come a time when they too will not be known to future generations.

6

FISHERY LAWS

The Public Laws should be amended and put in a condensed form, using as few plain words as possible to make them enforceable. Then they could be understood by all who want to fish. A few sections of the Public Laws should be repealed because they are not workable to-day. Printing is very expensive and it is useless to print a lot of unnecessary laws.

An appropriation sufficient to enforce the laws after they are enacted is very necessary because laws are of no account unless they are strictly enforced. We believe that this great department of Sea and Shore Fisheries which furnishes a goodly supply of our food is of as much importance as the Inland Fish and Game Department, and should have as much appropriated for its work.

RELIABLE INFORMATION REQUIRED

A good reliable statistical report is actually necessary if we are to know just how much the lobsters and fishermen increase or decrease each year on the coast of Maine. The best way to procure such a report is to license each fisherman that makes a business of fishing, having him give the actual value of boats, traps, trawl, nets, etc. on his application when he applies for a license

and at the close of the year when he applies for a new license, give the amount of his catch for the year in pounds, the price per pound and the amount received. Have the department of Sea and Shore Fisheries furnish blanks for said reports and have the reports sworn to before a Justice of Peace or Postmaster where the fisherman lives.

In this way the department will receive information which will be of vital importance to the fishermen as well as the department, because we will then know just how valuable the fishermen are to the state as a food producer, also the actual number of people it feeds, clothes and educates.

SUMMARY

A condensed report such as this does not do justice to the great Sea and Shore Fisheries Department of the State of Maine, but the present appropriation is not sufficient to allow a more detailed record of this department and its work.

SMELTS AND REASONS FOR THEIR PROTECTION

Should one enumerate the many species of food fish in which the waters of the State of Maine abound he would find that it is surprising to note the vastness of these resources and realize how fortunate we are to be living in this old State of ours after all, where plenty still abounds to a limited extent if we but look about us and take stock of the things which we are privileged to enjoy. It is fortunate indeed, to have at one's very door, so to speak, such a large number of varieties of fish from which to choose, and all in their special seasons. Take clams for instance, these are good throughout the year with the exception of the months May and June. Next, the lobster which is at its best during the months of July and August, but always good if one can pay the price; therefore with these two species alone if the supply was not depleted we would have them for use the year round. Now comes cod and haddock, these are at their best during the months, September, October, November and December, then at this time also lest this supply become exhausted we have the scallop at its best during the months of November and December, then for the remainder of the year we still have to

take into account such fish as we can get which leaves us cod, haddock, and lobsters to fall back on during January and February, but in March the smelts and alewives begin running in the streams, and the ice has left the clam flats, hence we are provided with two or more kinds of fish from which to choose our menu throughout the year. Isn't this being provided for very well when we look on and find that we have not given a moment's thought to the why, when or how of it?

The Great Ruler of All Good evidently knew much more about our requirements and what is best for us than we do ourselves, therefore supervised and directed these acts of nature accordingly and strange as it may seem purposes are accomplished, if not interrupted, with the highest degree of efficiency.

Now let us study the smelt for a little and see how the above influences one of the smallest fish of commercial value, abundant in the waters along the coast of Maine.

Smelts are very common both on the United States and European Coasts of the Atlantic, of which there seems to be many different species, but this article refers only to those of the "Marine Family", (*Osmerus Mordax*) of the Northwestern Atlantic. These are the marine specie of smelts which inhabit the waters along the Maine Coast and are almost an exact duplicate of the larger Penobscot Salmon, only much smaller of course; for this reason they were at first thought to be young salmon which attained a stage of growth wherein they descended the rivers to the sea in a sort of free swimming stage, later going back to the rivers, bays, streams, and inlets to spawn. This was found through experiment to be wrong however, and that although the smelt resembles the salmon in a great many of its ways, habits and haunts, it is a specie entirely apart from the salmon family even though so closely related as to be termed at first salmonidae, (of the salmon family.)

In the early days these little fish were abundant from the Virginia Coast to the St. Lawrence River but they have practically disappeared from the Atlantic Coast, as to abundance, south of the State of Maine in New England. Here however, they have ascended the streams to spawn, have become land locked where they thrive and are important, not only for the market but more especially as food for salmon and trout. Smelts

of the same family as these on the Atlantic Coast are to be found on the Pacific Coast from California to Alaska and in the far east as well. The smelt is absent from the south coast of England and Ireland but is abundant on the Coast of Finland where it is very common in fresh water lakes, remaining there the year round. It is also abundant on the Atlantic Coast of France but usually only ascends estuaries as far as regions of brackish water and resembles the charr in its feeding, etc.

From its habits it is found that smelts go about in schools instead of separately and alone by themselves, and that they exhibit regular migrations in most tidal waters. It is common in the Firth of Forth and also in the estuaries of the Thames. In most places it remains in fresh and brackish water from August to May, spawning about April, after which it descends to the sea for the summer months. The food of the smelt is for the most part very young fish such as the herring, shrimp and crustacean when in their infancy.

The smelt's eggs are very small having about the same diameter as that of the common pin. These eggs are light yellow in color and adhesive but not by surface alone, as is the case with the herring's eggs, for each has a short thread, the end of which becomes attached to plants, stones and other solid objects in the water. According to Mr. Day these eggs are deposited near the high water mark of spring tides so that they must be exposed to the air during the ebb and flood.

Let us now discuss the smelts which inhabit the waters along the Coast of Maine, in which specie we are more interested than any other. These inhabit the many harbors, bays and inlets along the coast from autumn until the early spring when they ascend the rivers, brooks and streams to deposit their eggs and then their mission accomplished they again return to the bays and inlets where they live during the summer months. This migration is not by any order or work of man, in fact, man has no part whatever for it is a dictation of nature and if not hindered in any way will keep the supply abundant, regardless of the death dealing blows carried on against her endeavors by man for as everyone knows these litte fish are taken in vast quantities from the many streams in the early spring when they come in to spawn, therefore, nature is crossed in her purpose even

before the first part of her mission is accomplished and many, many millions of eggs destroyed, for each little fish taken at this time represents just so many eggs that cannot possibly be fertilized and produce more smelts to build up the depleted supply for the next year, until now we realize that unless something more is done to protect the smelts on the Coast of Maine they will become scarcer and scarcer until eventually they will be either exterminated or driven to other shores.

The smelts of the Atlantic Coast of the United States attained a maximum length of twelve inches, which was four inches longer than the European specie, but to-day where can you find a marine smelt twelve inches long? We can remember having them that long in the fish markets of this State but they are not very abundant these days. This maximum is growing smaller all the time for as these little fish ascend the streams each year and season to deposit their spawn they are taken in vast quantities in nearly every little brook and stream on the coast from Eastport to Kittery. Did you ever try to count these streams on the way? If so, were you not surprised to find there were such a great number of them? Each little indentation represents the mouth of some river, brook, or stream, and these are practically all inhabited more or less by the smelts in their spawning season.

Some of these brooks and streams are partially protected in some localities by the laws of the State but many of the laws are so confusing that they cannot be enforced with any degree of efficiency.

Now that we have some idea of the great many streams and brooks in which smelts abound to get a clearer view of the situation consider that from a great many of these streams smelts are taken in vast quantities, sometimes the total number of pounds reaching the ton mark, 2000 pounds, and it takes approximately 10 smelts in count to the pound, so from one stream alone 20,000 smelts are taken each one laden with several thousands of eggs, in this manner approximately 20,000,000 of these little fish are destroyed. Is it any wonder that the smelts of to-day only average a length of some $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches for as this is persistently carried on from season to season and year to year the smelts are caught and marketed before ever they are permitted to reach

any great length until now they only average a length of 6 or 7 inches at the most.

According to the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries the general decrease and in some localities complete depletion of this smelt fishery is attributable to one or more, and in some instances, perhaps to all of several causes, which may be classified, at least in part, as follows: (1) interference with reproduction, (2) excessive and wasteful fishing.

The first class comprises obstructions and pollution of streams formerly frequented for breeding, and untimely and destructive fishing. The second involves principally the destruction of immature fish.

Dams have formed the principal obstructions of many streams and they are too general for specific citation. Instances of stream pollution effecting smelts are not as numerous but the Passaic River in New Jersey, is a conspicuous example. The destruction of smelts in and near the breeding places during the breeding season, formerly a common practice, has been eliminated in some localities, but still remains in others. In almost all of the present smelt fisheries, except the hook and line fishery, destruction of immature fish especially of a year old and upward prevails.

The smelt laws of different states vary in the protection and limitations restricting the fishing season, methods of capture, etc. In fact, they vary widely within the bounds of a single state. The more or less general waning smelt fishery demands conservative measures based upon and aimed at the conditions mentioned in the foregoing classification, while individual cases call for more stringent measures than others do, uniformity in intent of purpose is indicated. While by the most rigidly enforced and well observed laws, if any fishery at all is permitted, the adverse conditions cannot be wholly removed, most of them are remediable. Obstruction and pollution of many otherwise accessible breeding places may be corrected. The capture of smelts as they ascend streams at the spawning time is to a considerable extent preventable. Altho the duration of the breeding season is more or less variable, coastwise, and to some extent varies according to seasonal climatic conditions, a close season sufficiently long to embrace the breeding season of the extent of

the coast of each state may be prescribed. It may be a question regarding prevention of more or less destruction of immature smelts by present methods of capture. However, reduction of the amount of destruction is possible, and if the previously mentioned measures pertaining to breeding places and season, are observed or enforced, the loss from this source will become less appreciable.

The smelt is only a little fish you say, and not of much account. The first is granted but as to the second it furnishes food for a great many inhabitants along the coast of Maine, and is also the only means of gaining a living through the winter months in many places.

Next to the provinces, Maine is the paramount state in the smelt fishery, yielding 9.46% of the quantity and 9.2% of the value of smelts from shore fisheries of the Atlantic states. According to the fisheries census report 1908 (the latest pertaining to the general fisheries) the total production of smelts of the shore fisheries of the Atlantic states amounted to 691,300 pounds, representing a value of \$69,100; whereas in 1888, twenty years before, the total catch in New England alone was 1,397,458 pounds, having a value of \$103,584. Ten years later, 1898, the total had increased to 1,624,824 pounds with a value of \$140,913.

The New England fishery in 1908 produced only 683,800 pounds, having a value of \$69,100; in ten years having fallen off 941,024 pounds in quantity, and \$71,712 in value.

From the above figures it is plainly evident that these delicious little fish are very much neglected as to protection and just so far is the whole fishery undermined. Why not give this industry the laws it merits and protect the smelts all along the coast in their spawning season at least, and soon we will see the results of our efforts in a greater abundance and increase in size of this specie of Maine's natural food products.

WHY A NINE-INCH LOBSTER LAW WILL RUIN THE INDUSTRY

More than one hundred years has passed since Maine gained her freedom from Massachusetts. There were bitter fights waged at many sessions of the assemblies before she gained the right as an independent state. Since 1820 she has governed her own business and has gained the confidence and respect of the whole world.

Had she not gained her independence from Massachusetts her fisheries would have suffered more than they already have under her own management because a nine-inch lobster law was passed in Massachusetts during Gov. Guild's administration, with a direct understanding that if he signed said bill the next year the legislature would put through the double gage bill, prohibiting the sale of the large adult lobsters but before the next legislature convened the double gage bill was forgotten and the nine-inch law still remains in force and probably will for many years to come because the fishermen claim that if they went back to the ten-inch gage again it would take years for the lobsters to increase in sufficient numbers for the fishermen to earn a living wage lobster fishing. It is also stated that three years after the nine-inch law went into force that seventy-five per cent of the lobster fishermen in Massachusetts had to go out of business because there were so few lobsters to be caught. The fishing grounds were nearly depleted but after many years of resting the lobsters increased to the extent that a small number of fishermen were able to earn a livelihood.

The advocates of a nine-inch law for Maine stress a great deal about the lobsters increasing in Massachusetts, when in reality, if there were as many fishermen in Massachusetts as there are in Maine, many lobster fishermen would have to call on the town in which they live for food to keep their families from starvation.

Lobsters on the Maine coast do not arrive at the breeding stage until they are ten inches in length. If they are taken when nine inches in length they are deprived of the opportunity to breed once and if we catch all of them before they arrive at the breeding stage, where are we going to get a future supply?

There are to-day, more than three thousand six hundred homes located near the coast line in Maine. In these homes there are approximately eighteen thousand people who are clothed, fed and educated from the returns derived from the lobster industry alone. What would become of fishermen and their families if the lobsters were depleted and the army of lobster fishermen thrown out of employment.

To-day in every locality where the lobsters have been protected you find good boats, good homes well painted and furnished, with the necessities and some comforts of life, and every indication of prosperity and happiness. As the writer travels along the coast from Kittery to Eastport, prosperity is in evidence where the fishermen obey the fisheries' laws.

There are a few places however, that do not show thrift and those are the localities where protection has not been practiced. The fishermen have poor boats, houses in need of repairs and seldom furnished with few, if any comforts of life, showing conclusively that the fishermen cannot destroy all the lobsters they catch and still have an abundant supply, and these are the places where the fishermen want a nine-inch law and have tried for several legislatures to have a bill passed compelling nine tenths of the fishermen to observe a law that they know will ruin their business; a law that the thrifty fishermen who think not only of to-day but of the future, do not want.

No doubt the 1925 Legislature will be called on to pass a nine-inch lobster law but we trust that the members will stick by the vast majority and not be swept off their feet by the few who want the nine-inch bill passed and who for that reason will be at the State House championing their cause while the majority remain at home with their families and trust to the good judgment of the legislative members to protect their interests.

This vast majority through their influence and vote made it possible for the senators and representatives from the coastal towns to be present at the Legislature. They are a hard working, God-fearing class of men and should be encouraged and their rights protected in every possible way because they help to furnish a large part of the food on which we live.

BEST WAY TO INCREASE LOBSTERS

It is a universally admitted fact that the processes of mother nature in the propagation of animals in their kind can very seldom be improved on even by the highest scientific art of our modern scientists, chemists, naturalists and biologists. The above circumstance in itself should be enough to convince the most pessimistic minds that one of the best ways to increase the lobsters on the Maine coast is to purchase, mark and liberate the egg-bearing lobsters to hatch naturally and thus improve and preserve the industry for future generations.

The fishermen as a general rule are exceedingly practical men and realize that the purchasing and liberating of egg lobsters by the State is now and will continue to be a great asset toward maintaining their industry. This is brought home more forcefully to them by the percentage of small lobsters found in their traps this year as compared to previous years; a practical proof of the fact that this is one of the right ways to increase the number of lobsters. If they are "from Missouri," as the saying goes, they are shown that this is not one of those theoretical methods alone, by the conditions revealed to them personally as they haul their traps from day to day, thus they are in a position to know whether this is a good method to pursue or not. Another point, if this method is not proving practical, why, then, do so many of the fishermen themselves agree on this one subject and cooperate with the Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries in the purchasing and liberating of the egg-bearing lobsters. This in itself should solve the problem involved.

A majority of the people seem to be under the impression that the appropriation for seed lobsters is grabbed up by the dealers and thus provided a means of speculation for them. This is not true. The dealers have pounds which they stock with lobsters when the price is down and hold them until the price goes up again, then they take these lobsters from the pounds and sell them. These lobsters remain in the pounds on an average of four months and during that time there are bound to be lobsters having eggs which they bear the year round; however there are months in the year, usually the fall months, when the greatest number of lobsters have eggs attached. In view of the above fact the dealers cannot possibly handle lobsters without getting some with eggs attached.

The statute provides that lobsters with eggs attached may be purchased by the State at the rate of 15% above market price, but at no time during the career of this Commission have egg lobsters been purchased above the market price and in majority of cases they have been paid for at the rate of three to five cents less per pound than the market price in order to stretch the money as far as it would go. Consequently the dealers are not as anxious to deal in egg lobsters as the general public have been led to believe.

Is it right to make the pound keepers suffer a loss when nature has forced the egg lobsters on them and is it good judgment to discourage the protection of the "goose which lays the golden eggs"? The pound keepers do not ask a cent profit on their egg-bearing lobsters. All they ask is to get their money back, and do not protest when they only get 75% of it, but they do feel it is a hardship for the State to make laws which tend to handicap them in business by not appropriating sufficient funds to purchase all the egg lobsters. These same pound keepers are doing a great deal if not more than any other class of people for the increase of the industry and should be encouraged instead of discouraged. They should have the cost price of their lobsters and should receive their money promptly since they are expected to handle these without any profit. Past history proves that sufficient funds have never been appropriated to enable the dealers to receive their pay promptly and they often times have to wait six months and even a year before the legislature could take action and these men receive their money for egg lobsters sold to the State.

If this great lobster industry which brings nearly six million dollars into the State annually, furnishes a business for more than four thousand fishermen and dealers, feeds and clothes approximately eighteen thousand men, women and children is not worth an expenditure of twenty thousand dollars annually for its increase I do not know of any industry of equal value that is.

Think of the value of the lobster industry to the State, the number of men it furnishes employment for, the number it feeds, clothes and educates and the amount of choice, wholesome food it provides and I feel sure you will decide that an appropriation of twenty thousand dollars should be allowed.

APPROXIMATE AMOUNT EXPENDED BY THE DEPARTMENT
OF SEA AND SHORE FISHERIES

July 1st, 1922 to July 1st, 1923

“Salaries and Clerk Hire”		\$4,551.00
“General Office Expenses”		
Rent of Office	\$300.00	
Electricity	15.28	
Printing	340.76	
Janitor Service	72.00	
Equipment	130.63	
Director’s Traveling Expenses	559.74	
Commissioner’s Traveling Expenses	110.61	
Miscellaneous, (Telephone Bills, Office Supplies, Stamps, etc.)	876.57	
		\$2,405.59
“Pay and Expenses of Wardens”		
Wardens’ Salaries	\$33,077.84	
Wardens’ Expenses	8,874.75	
Repairing and operating boats, including machine shop bills, rent of wharves, boats etc.	9,125.09	
		\$51,077.68
“Purchase of Seed Lobsters”		\$14,847.10
“Propagation of Shell Fish”		
Equipment	\$ 79.79	
Rent of Boat	250.00	
Gasoline for Boat	263.86	
Salaries of Men	2,092.10	
Expenses of Men	294.27	
Repairs on Boats	12.99	
		\$2,993.01

July 1st, 1923 to July 1st, 1924

“Salaries and Clerk Hire”		\$4,187.84
“General Office Expenses”		
Rent	\$300.00	
Electricity	12.00	
Printing	253.80	
Janitor Service	96.00	
Equipment	125.95	
Director’s Traveling Expenses	448.06	
Commissioners’ Traveling Expenses	758.46	
Miscellaneous, (Telephone bills, Office Sup- plies, Stamps, etc.)	849.46	
		\$2,843.73

"Pay and Expenses of Wardens"			
Wardens' Salaries		\$25,172.04	
Wardens' Expenses		7,801.41	
Repairing and operating boats, including machine shop bills, rent of boats, wharves etc.		6,707.42	
		<hr/>	\$39,680.87
"Purchase of Seed Lobsters"			\$10,628.17
"Purchase of Egg Lobsters 1922"			3,757.00
"Purchase of Engine for boat, Pauline"			1,994.25
"Propagation of Shell Fish"			
Equipment	\$ 13.42		
Rent of Boats	200.00		
Gasoline for Boats	174.49		
Salaries of Men	1,954.20		
Expenses of Men	114.37		
Repairs	39.30		
	<hr/>		\$2,495.78

APPROPRIATIONS ASKED FOR NEXT TWO YEARS

	July 1, 1925 to July 1, 1926	July 1, 1926 to July 1, 1927
"Salaries and Clerk Hire"	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
"General Office Expenses"	5,000.00	5,000.00
"Pay and Expenses of Wardens"	110,000.00	110,000.00
"Purchase of Seed Lobsters"	20,000.00	20,000.00
"Propagation of Shell Fish"	5,000.00	5,000.00

PREVIOUS APPROPRIATIONS

	July 1, 1923 to July 1, 1924	July 1, 1924 to July 1, 1925
"Salaries and Clerk Hire"	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
"General Office Expenses"	3,000.00	3,000.00
"Pay and Expenses of Wardens"	40,000.00	40,000.00
"Purchase of Seed Lobsters"	15,000.00	15,000.00
"Propagation of Shell Fish"	2,500.00	2,500.00
"Purchase of Engine for Pauline"	2,000.00	
"Purchase of Seed Lobsters 1922"	3,757.00	

AMOUNT RECEIVED FROM FINES AND LICENSES

	July 1, 1922 to July 1, 1923	July 1, 1923 to July 1, 1924
Fines	\$1,286.25	\$1,130.00
Licenses	576.00	540.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$1,862.25	1,670.00

WHY A LIBERAL APPROPRIATION IS NECESSARY
FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF SEA AND SHORE FISHERIES

The Sea and Shore Fisheries of the State of Maine represents millions of dollars. This valuable resource makes possible the livelihood of approximately forty thousand people and assists greatly in furnishing food for the whole world because large quantities of Maine cured salt fish and sardines are shipped annually to foreign countries besides a goodly supply to the people of nearly every state in the Union. These fisheries also provide an abundant supply of the most wholesome and choicest food to the inhabitants of our own State. The fishing industry is one of the most valuable industries in the State. The only other industry of equal importance is that of agriculture. These two industries provide by far the greater amount of food on which we live and consequently should be protected and developed to their greatest extent.

There are approximately twelve thousand fishermen on the coast who brave the storms of winter and suffer untold hardships to provide a livelihood for their families. These fishermen should have every encouragement possible, their rights should be protected by the strict enforcement of just laws. A sufficient number of wardens should be employed to patrol the waters of the State and apprehend the violators. If this is not done and there is not an adequate force to put the rogue out of business, he will catch and sell the illegal lobsters which the honest fisherman throws back into the ocean, the only interest on his investment he has to look forward to, and in this way deprive the honest man's family of the comforts of life they have a right to expect in a prosperous state like Maine. The honest, law-abiding fisherman is the one who should be protected.

With the small appropriations this department has had in the past two years it has been impossible to do the work that actually

must be done if any degree of efficiency is to be acquired. A limited warden force and a limited number of boats to patrol the coast properly has been a great stumbling block to this department.

A majority of the fishermen to-day are honest citizens but the traffic in short lobsters has had and is having a very marked degrading influence on the fishing communities along the coast. We are asking for a sufficient appropriation to put on a warden force that can take care of the persistent violators so the honest fishermen can be protected, earn a sufficient amount to furnish his family with some of the comforts of life and still have enough to educate his children. The future of the state depends entirely on the children and if they live and acquire their education among God fearing, law-abiding citizens there can be no question about the future prosperity of our State.

The Director has had seven years experience in the Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries besides having a life long experience in catching, curing and marketing fish and lobsters. Practically all his life has been spent working among and with the fishermen, studying their requirements and looking to the future improvement of the industry with an eye always to the best way to educate the fishermen and their children.

I am asking only for an amount necessary to do efficient work in order that the department may improve the conditions on the Maine coast annually instead of taking a step backward. It has been my experience that if we do not advance we surely will go backward, and that very fast. The past two years have found us retarding because we have not had sufficient funds appropriated to carry on efficient work.

The State contributes to the support of a college to educate the farmers as to the requirements of the land to produce maximum crops and how best to combat the pests that beset their harvests annually. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are appropriated each year to protect the farmers against anything that is liable to retard the future of agriculture and this is right and just because they furnish food.

The fisherman should have equal protection with the farmer for he is almost continually at the peril of the sea and his life is at stake much of the time, while the farmer has no such handi-

cap to contend with and his earnings, work and losses are not so much controlled by weather conditions. To say the least, the fisherman should be protected against the violator as the farmer is protected against pests which are only seasonal, whereas the violator is constantly at his occupation until apprehended and stopped in his work of retarding the progress of the industry, therefore an amount equal to the sum appropriated for agriculture should be appropriated for the fishermen because they also furnish an abundance of our food.

Please do not misunderstand me for I am not criticising agriculture in any way, nor do I think they have any more than they deserve. The agricultural department was mentioned merely as a means of comparison for I honestly believe the fisheries should have an equal appropriation because they are of equally vital importance, if not of more importance for when the fisheries have become exhausted they cannot be cleared, fertilized and made to produce abundantly in many seasons. It means generations, possibly ages and vast expenditures of money to bring them back to abundance again, if they can be brought back at all.

What would have happened at the time the United States entered the World War if it had not been for the fishermen? They entered the service when war was declared and did not have to be drafted. They volunteered, took command of the ships that carried the soldiers and supplies to England and France, who in their turn did their duty well. The Marines who stopped the German advance and kept them from entering Paris were made up partly of fishermen. In that emergency it took courage and endurance and the fishermen were equal to the job and did not lack for courage because their business requires courage and endurance very nearly every day in the year, and they are accustomed to hairbreadth escapes from death frequently as they go about their daily work. Shall we turn these boys down after the record they have made or shall we give them equal rights and privileges with the farmer boys and recommend a good generous appropriation to guard and develop their industry, thus protecting them from the persistent violators, the worst pest and enemy they have to contend with, who keeps and sells the lobsters the honest fishermen throw back into the sea to grow.

The cod is a valuable food fish and we should have an appropriation sufficient and adequate laws to protect the parent cod as they come into the bays to spawn in the springtime. The cod is a pelagic spawning fish and for that reason they seek the protected bays for the purpose of producing their young because heavy storms and many of the smaller fish destroy the young cod by the millions. The parent cod are taken in large quantities annually when the female is laden with spawn and the male with milt and their instinct to reach shoal water at this time makes them an exceptionally easy prey to the net fishermen. The cod furnishes a very valuable food supply also haddock and hake, the three species contributing millions of dollars to our fishermen annually as a result of which they should at least have some protection and care.

The smelt is another valuable fish which enters the brooks of Maine every spring to spawn. It is not only a food producing natural resource but also affords a great amount of pleasure in the catching. These fish although small in size furnish an abundant economical supply of food for the inhabitants of New England, as a result of which thousands of dollars are brought into the state, thus assisting materially in the support of hundreds of families. Smelt spawn deposited in the shallow brooks along our coast that would produce many thousands of dollars worth of fish is destroyed annually by men and boys who wade in the brooks and destroy it and often times parent fish are taken, no use whatever being made of them other than the pleasure afforded the person catching them. A sufficient warden force should be maintained to protect and improve this valuable branch of the industry which is also a great natural food producing resource.

The alewives which migrate to the rivers to deposit their spawn are not protected as they should be and consequently bring only a small revenue into the State, whereas if properly protected and adequate fishways maintained these fish would increase in abundance by leaps and bounds. This fact has been demonstrated at Duck trap stream, a small stream which enters the ocean at Lincolnville. For a great many years two mills were maintained on this stream and tight dams prevented the alewives from ascending the river further than the first dam,

consequently their spawning ground could not be reached and the spawn cast was immediately destroyed and for many years alewives were not known in or near Lincolnville. A few years ago the mills were closed, the dams went out and now every spring finds a larger number of alewives ascending the stream to spawn. Protection is all that is necessary to increase and bring back to normal an almost depleted industry which once was a valuable asset to the State and provided hundreds of families with the comforts of life and was available as an abundant, natural food supply for the people of not only Maine and New England but of the United States. Why should not a sufficient amount be appropriated to protect this branch of the industry?

The Penobscot river salmon known all over New England as one of the best game fish, also one of the most palatable, used to be so plentiful and the rivers of Maine so filled with them when on their way to the spawning grounds that the stronger and more active fish would actually crowd the weaker and less active ones out on the river bank, there to die in large quantities. Today, what has become of the salmon? They are almost depleted, a few are taken in the Penobscot river at the Bangor pool by sportsmen and few are taken in weirs and nets in the rivers along the coast. Here is another of our valuable food fish that is capable of bringing millions of dollars into the State annually and providing thousands of our families with luxury and comfort besides bringing hundreds of sportsmen to our rivers from other states and yet these fish have been allowed to decline almost to the point of extinction when sufficient protection and good fish ways would bring them back to a large degree as they once were and the rivers of Maine once more would be teeming with salmon as in the days of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers. Are we going to let this valuable food supply slip from our last hold on it and go by default or are we going to give it the protection it deserves? The name "Penobscot River Salmon," is cherished by every New England family and so let us have sufficient funds to protect it from extinction. Please consider the value of the salmon to the sportsman, the income to the state and the quantity of excellent food it will provide the inhabitants of New England for future generations if properly protected.

The lobsters are among the most valuable fish caught on the

Maine coast. Stringent laws have been enacted for their protection but no matter how perfect laws are if they are not enforced they do not amount to the paper they are printed on and cannot be enforced properly unless there are a sufficient number of wardens to patrol the coast. Sixty wardens I believe would be an adequate number to protect the fisheries of the State with a degree of efficiency.

The name "Maine Lobster," comes foremost into the minds of every person in the United States when he is considering food to be supplied for a banquet or when he has a dear friend or relative he wishes to invite to lunch. All of the great banquets are never complete unless the name "Lobster", occupies a prominent place on the menu. When the great banquet given in honor of the diplomats who came to America to attend the disarmament conference was planned it was not quite complete until lobsters were supplied. Maine is indeed honored by being the largest lobster producing state in the Union. Are we going to let the lobsters go by default until they also follow the path of the salmon and porgies or are we going to consider the importance of the vast lobster fisheries of Maine which calls more than five hundred thousand people to our coast in summer from other states, furnishing thousands of families of our own State with the necessities and some comforts of life, providing the chief article of food for every banquet of any importance in America and a living for approximately eighteen thousand people. This branch of the industry has been relied on to keep the wolf from the door when all else has failed. When the granite quarries shut down and the mills, factories and shops were closed the inmates of those plants turned to lobster fishing as a means of livelihood until business should pick up again and the manufacturers resume operation once more. This fact was brought home to us very forcibly after the World War. When all else failed the people turned to the lobster industry and it helped them over the hard times. Are we going to give this most valuable branch of the fishing industry proper protection by an adequate warden force and a generous appropriation?

The herring fishery is also another large branch of our fishing industry. These little fish are consumed in large quantities

in the production of sardines, smoked herring and bait for the larger fish, especially in the salted and frozen state.

The sardine pack in 1917 amounted to approximately 2,300,000 cases and sold for \$12,150,000. The factories consumed 1,500,000 bushels of herring at a cost of approximately \$4,100,000 and the waste or bi-product sold for \$12,500. Fifty-two factories were operated and they gave employment to five thousand people. The statistics of the year 1916 give us a fairly correct account of the smoked herring industry. There were eighty-three smoking houses and 899,280 boxes of scaled herring were cured and sold for \$98,920. There were also 5,308,250 pounds of boneless herring put on the market and sold for \$583,907. 374,700 bushels of herring were used at a cost of \$249,800 and 12,000 people were employed during the season. Vast quantities of herring were used for line fish, and lobster bait, also large quantities for food of which we have no accurate account. The herring business should be protected and the fishermen engaged in this industry encouraged.

The clam is also another very valuable food fish of which the inhabitants of the State may avail themselves. When properly protected and cultivated clams furnish an abundance of cheap wholesome food. It is estimated that there are at least ten thousand acres of clam flats on the Maine coast capable of producing one thousand bushels of clams per acre under ordinary conditions or ten million bushels of clams annually. This amount of clams would feed all the inhabitants of the State two meals a day as long as Maine remains a State if properly cultivated and the most that has ever been appropriated for the "Propagation of Shell Fish," is \$3,000. Isn't this rather small for so valuable an industry which is capable of furnishing such an abundance of economical wholesome food to the less fortunate inhabitants of our State? I have asked for five thousand dollars for this branch of the industry because I feel that this amount is actually necessary for its proper development.

Comparatively few people seem to realize the vast resources and benefits that are derived from the great fisheries of the State. The majority of the people of Maine are familiar with our great agricultural resources but there are very few persons residing within the boundaries of Maine who realize that the

fisheries are next in importance to agriculture. Maine has two thousand five hundred miles of coast line and along her shores reside approximately twelve thousand fishermen who are engaged in the catching of fish and lobsters for a livelihood.

The several species of these natural resources are lobsters, salmon, smelts, mackerel, scallops, clams, cod, haddock, hake, pollock, and other line fish, and the value of this fishing industry reaches far into the millions when we stop and think, realizing the great amount of revenue derived and the vast abundance of food it supplies as a consequence of which the question arises, "Is this great industry worth the money expended for its protection and encouragement?" If we are going to protect this vast natural resource of ours how shall we do it? First we must have laws that will stand the test of enforcement and prosecution, second a sufficient appropriation to enable us to enforce those laws to the letter.

The amount to be appropriated lies in the hands of the Legislature, and I trust and pray that you will read my plea which I have presented to you and will consider seriously the unlimited food supply this valuable industry is capable of producing, the revenue it brings into the State, the number of people who derive a benefit from it, the number of families it feeds, clothes and educates, then compare it with agriculture and see if it does not at least justify an appropriation equal to the amount appropriated for agriculture.