

The Yukon Territory has its share of the better-known food and game fish but, while they are important as a local food supply and as a tourist attraction, they are not significant enough to support a commercial enterprise for export purposes. In the Yukon, king salmon are caught by the white residents who use an ingenious device known as a fish-wheel, unique in Canada's commercial fisheries. The Indians use gill nets set in eddies and the majority of the fish are filleted, smoked and dried for winter use. Both fish-wheels and nets bring in small quantities of other fish such as the whitefish, inconnu and Arctic grayling.

In the southwest Yukon, the Alsek River and its tributaries contain rainbow trout, actually a landlocked steelhead, and a few land-locked sockeye salmon. The larger Yukon lakes produce whitefish, lake trout and "least herring" or cisco. For the sportsmen, there are "bluefish", Dolly Varden trout, rainbow trout and pike.

Great Bear Lake and Great Slave Lake are linked by the mighty Mackenzie River which drains a quarter of Canada and is comparable in size to the St. Lawrence. This river system and the thousands of lakes in the Territories constitute a great food reservoir for the local residents. Fishing is a staple summer industry of the Indians and of all those white residents who have to travel by dog-team during the winter. In the Mackenzie Valley the sled dogs alone consume each year several million pounds of fish—whitefish, herring and inconnu—and most of it comes from the Mackenzie River in the summer and autumn when the Indians gather around the trading posts where fishing is good. Great Bear Lake provides fish for the Indians in sufficient quantity but it holds little prospect for commercial fishing because the fish populations form merely a fringe inhabiting the near-shore zone and could not survive a large-scale operation.

The commercial development of the fisheries for export purposes in the Northwest Territories has special possibilities. The lower Mackenzie River could be commercially fished, particularly from the Sans Sault rapids north to the delta but such a venture is not yet practicable because the catch would have to be shipped a thousand miles by refrigerator barges to Great Slave during a very short navigable season.

The area is a fisherman's paradise, of course, but access is difficult and only Great Slave Lake has been developed to any extent for the accommodation of sports fishermen.

The first half of the twentieth century with its two world wars and great depression brought fluctuations of fortune to the fisheries industry but it has been, on the whole, an era of increasing development and prosperity in this field. The increased use of trawlers, the development of quick-freezing and filleting equipment and cold-storage facilities have all helped to make the industry much more diversified than formerly. Modern methods of packaging and canning have been adapted to fishery products. Certain varieties of fish such as British Columbia salmon, Atlantic lobster, halibut and whitefish command premium prices on the world market so that, although not the greatest fish exporting nation (Norway exports larger quantities), Canada's exports lead the world in terms of dollar value. The marketed value of the nation's fisheries topped the \$200,000,000 mark in 1951, three-quarters of the amount being obtained from outside markets. This is not a high figure when compared with the production of some other Canadian industries but for the people of the coastal provinces and the northern territories it is a dominating factor in their economic life.