

CATCHING SALMON WITH FISH WHEELS.

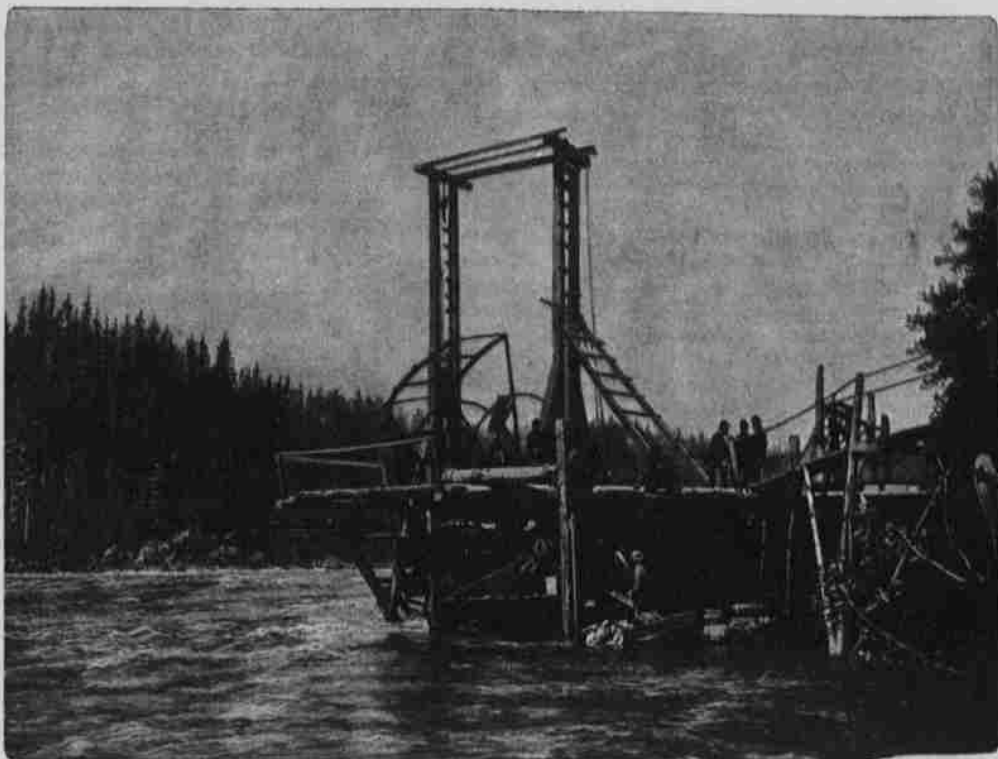
It is just now an interesting question whether the fish wheels that operate in the vicinity of the cascades and dalles of the Columbia shall be permitted to catch small fish, and a committee of inquiry from the legislature is investigating the question for the purpose of framing legislation on the subject.

Heretofore the law has regulated the size of the meshes of all nets and seines used in fishing for salmon on the Columbia, with the intent that only large fish should be caught. In addition to this the catching of small fish has been discouraged by the cannerymen, who have refused to accept small ones from the fishermen. The fundamental reason for this is the belief that small salmon should not be taken from the river, but should be permitted to remain until they have reached the usual canning size of twenty pounds or more. At first glance this seems a reasonable and proper action, and so it would be were the

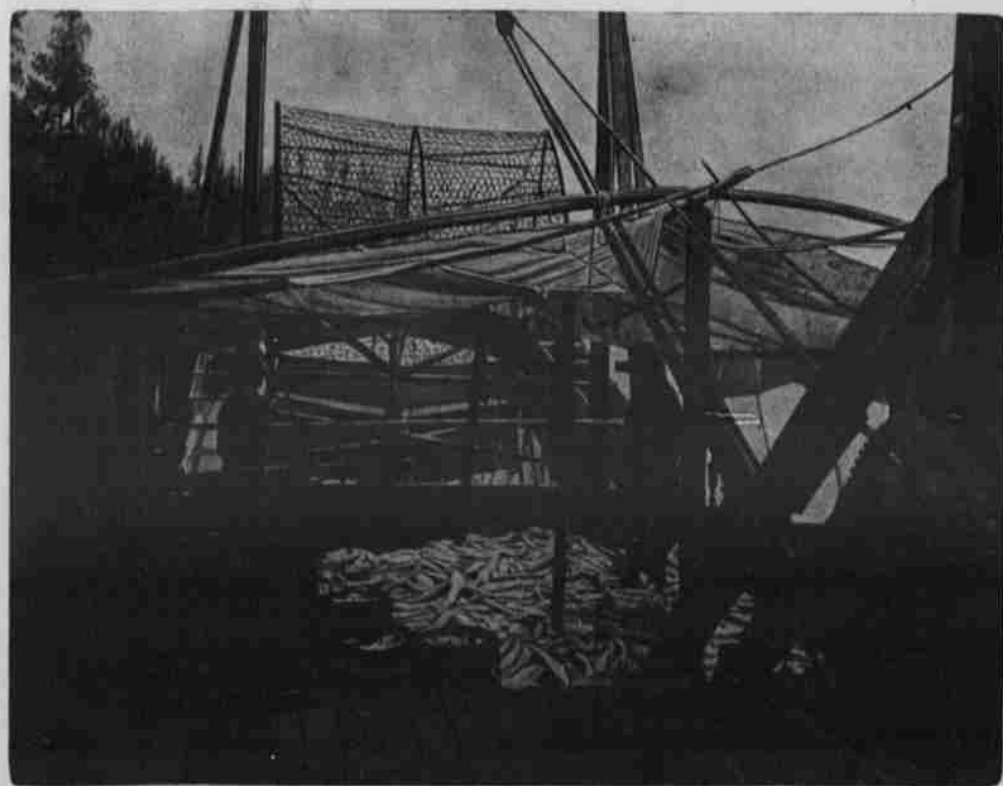
habits of the salmon the same as freshwater fish, and did they live and grow in the river. Such, however, is not the case, and when science investigated the question it threw much light upon it and revealed a condition of affairs quite at variance with those generally supposed to prevail.

A great deal of conflicting testimony has been gathered upon the subject of the salmon and his habits, especially the Quinnot, or Chinook, salm-

on, the royal member of the family and the one the most widely distributed along the coast. Under different names this fish is known in the Sacramento, Columbia and Fraser rivers, in the streams of Puget sound and in those of far Alaska. Many other varieties of salmon are found in these



A FISH WHEEL ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER.



DECK OF A SCOW FISH WHEEL.

same streams, no less than half a dozen running in the Columbia alone, but none of them are so large and so rich of flesh as the royal Chinook of the Columbia, *alias* the king salmon of Puget sound. As it is this valuable fish the state is interested in preserving, and as it would be an advantage rather than a detriment to the fishing interests of the state if no other kind were found in the stream, the question of catching small fish hinges, then,

upon the effect such a practice would have on this particular variety. No objection has been raised to the catching of small bluebacks and steelheads, for the double reason that these varieties never attain a large size and are not valuable for canning purposes. The question to be considered is simply, should the fish wheels, or other appliances, be permitted to catch small Chinook salmon?

It is claimed by pisciculturists, and generally admitted by fishermen, that the home of the salmon is in the deep waters of the sea; that after being hatched in the warm headwaters of the streams he makes his way to the ocean and there remains for four years, returning at that time by natural instinct to the same stream from whence he came, for the sole purpose of ex-