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ASTORIA, OREGON

### FISHERIES REPORT

Deals Extensively With McKenzie Hatchery Affair.

#### VAN DUSEN SCORES WEBSTER

Investigation Discloses That Dolly Varden Trout and White Fish Have Been Feeding on Dead Fry—Live Fry Too Agile For Voracious Fish.

To the Honorable Board of Fish Commissioners, Salem, Oregon.

Gentlemen:—In regard to the published statements that have appeared in our papers of late about the salmon fry raised at the McKenzie River Hatchery Station and liberated into the McKenzie River being devoured by trout and other fish native to that stream, I will say that I have made a careful research into the affair, and from what I have been able to find out, I am more convinced than ever, that with a careful hatchery superintendent, who will conscientiously exert himself at all times to keep the hatchery offal (that is, dead eggs and dead fry) from entering the streams, as our superintendents are always instructed to do; and will be particular not to liberate any of the fry until after the yolk-sac has entirely disappeared, and then, be particular when and where he liberates the fry, we will never have any of them devoured by trout and other fish native to the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers, nor in fact any of the other Columbia River tributaries.

And further, from the investigation made, I beg to state that I have been enabled to determine beyond a question of doubt that the fry, of which ex-Superintendent J. A. Talbert reports, and of which ex-Deputy Fish Warden H. A. Webster wrote about in his newspaper article, were dead fry that had smothered in the hatchery troughs the night of Mr. Webster's arrival at the station, or the next night following and that there were at the very least calculation one hundred (100,000) thousand of these dead and smothered fry dumped out together into the water supply creek below the hatchery troughs, a short distance above its confluence with the McKenzie River, during the night and the next day, which was the 3d and 4th, or the 4th and 5th of January, 1907; and on the 6th, Superintendent Talbert's report shows the catching of the two Dolly Varden trout and three white fish in a pool at the mouth of this creek, that were full of salmon fry, and of which Webster's article states were devoured after being liberated from the hatchery in the usual manner.

It seems that Mr. Webster visited this hatchery unaware to this office, during the forepart of January, 1907, for the apparent purpose of confuting the published reports recently received from the United States Bureau of Fisheries and from John Pease Babcock, commissioner of British Columbia on the subject of "Salmon Fry Destruction," liberated from the hatcheries. That the night of his arrival at the station, or the first night thereafter, it was very rainy and stormy, and before retiring for the night, along between 9 and 10 o'clock, the hands all being congregated in the dwelling house, excepting Frank A. Peplot who lived at home, it was suggested that someone go up to the hatchery troughs which were some two hundred (200) yards away to see that everything was all right for the night; this Mr. C. T. Peek volunteered to do, and when he got up there he found the water supply shut off by the trash and sand that came down the supply creek and the young fry all smothering; he immediately cleared away the trash and got the water running again through the troughs and then ran back to the house and gave the alarm and got all hands out to help resuscitate the fish; they worked doing this for a couple of hours when Webster and Talbert concluded that the worst of them and better be siphoned out of the troughs in order to clear the screens, so at this work, he assisted Mr. Talbert, and Mr. C. L. Roadarmel assisted Mr. Webster; that altogether that night four or five bucketfuls of these dead and smothered fish, amounting to forty or fifty thousand, were drawn off and dumped into the water supply creek, a short distance above where it empties into the McKenzie River; after clearing the screens of these fish, which was along about midnight, Messrs. Webster, Talbert and Roadarmel retired for the night and Mr. Peek remained on duty the rest of

(Concluded on page 6)

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