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### FISH WHEEL BILL

(Continued from page 1)

the quoted authorities desired to prove. There are unfortunately men who for consideration are as versatile as the fallen angel of whom Milton says: "He could make the worse appear the better reason."

On the other hand, who are the men behind the bill which the fishwheel owner's bill is intended to kill? (According to our law if there are conflicting bills on any subject, and if such conflicting bills receive the majority vote necessary to carry them, then the bill receiving the highest majority vote becomes law.)

The men who stand for abolition of salmon fishing at head of tide in the Columbia as officer and executive committee of the Columbia River Salmon Protective Association, are as follows: George M. Orton of Portland, president. He is an ex-member of the Oregon legislature and manager of the Multnomah Printing Company. The vice-president is Jay Tuttle, M. D., of Astoria. He is an ex-State Senator. The treasurer is F. E. Beach, of Portland, wholesale and retail merchant. The secretary is H. M. Lornsen, Astoria, secretary of the Columbia River Fishermen's Union and second vice-president of the Oregon State Federation of Labor. On the board of directors are: Thomas A. McBride, Oregon City, circuit judge; Wm. I. Vawter, Medford, member of the Legislature; G. S. Wright, McMinnville, State Senator; Chas. G. Roberts, Tanglewood, Hood River; D. H. Miller, Medford; T. B. Kay, Salem, State Senator; Jas. Withycombe, Corvallis, director of the Oregon Experiment Station and candidate for Governor on the Republican ticket at the last election; James A. Lackey, Mayor of Ontario; C. C. Huntley, Oregon City, druggist, member of Oregon Legislature; Wm. Miller of Burns, attorney at law; John H. Smith, Astoria, attorney at law and ex-State Senator; Frank Kankkonen, Astoria, manager Union Fishermen's Co-operative Packing Company.

James Withycombe, in accepting the position on the board of directors, wrote: "I shall be pleased to accept a place on the board of directors for the protection mentioned, namely, for the protection of the Columbia River salmon. I believe that every honorable means should be employed to protect this great natural source of wealth, not only for the present but for the future generations."

Senator G. S. Wright wrote: "Will be glad to do anything for the fishing industry, by serving on the board or otherwise."

William I. Vawter, in accepting, wrote: "It seems to me in every way commendable and that legislation that is protection along the lines indicated should have the support of every patriotic citizen."

Judge McBride when asked to serve as president of the Association declined on account of press of business but readily agreed to serve as a director, adding: "The only way to save our salmon is to stop fishing at the head of tide, so as to give the fish a chance to reach our hatcheries and natural spawning grounds. For many years I have fought for the protection of our salmon and am pleased to see this concerted action. My voice and pen will ever be ready to save one of Oregon's greatest industries. I am a poor man, but if necessary I shall contribute my mite towards defraying the expenses to fully present this question to the voters of the State."

Many, many other words of advice and cheer have been given the officers of the Association in this task to save our salmon. Necessary limit of space forbids here to quote any more.

Judges, legislators, professional men, scientists, business men and fishermen are represented in this Association. Leading citizens of the State, seeing that one of the leading industries of the State is threatened

with extinction, have come forward to rescue it.

And opposed to the bill to stop fishing at head of tide, at the confluence of the Columbia River with the Sandy—a bill fathered by these public-spirited citizens—is opposed this sham bill of the fishwheel owners. The fishwheel owners were too cautious—though it is alleged the proper term is "too cowardly"—to father their bill, so they hired a discarded deputy of the State Fishery Bureau to champion a bill which is a trick-bill from top to bottom.

Now as to the tricks in that bill. In the argument supporting the wheel owners bill a desire is expressed to save our salmon.

But true to the methods of trickery, section 1—the main section—is not taken up first. Instead, sections 3 and 4 are defended and section 1—the biggest nigger in this legislative woodpile—is sandwiched in between sections 2 and 5.

That trick, however, is very clumsy and can be easily exposed.

Section 1 of the fishwheel owners' bill provides that no fishing at nights can be carried on in the channels used for commercial navigation.

That means that the four thousand net fishermen of the Columbia, with an investment of about one and a half million dollars in boats and nets must quit the Columbia if the law passes. The fishwheel owners and Webster know this full well, hence they tried to hide this section in their argument, hoping to thus fool the voters of the State.

To explain: Fishwheels or fish traps are located on the banks of the river, or in narrows or at falls, where they presumably do not interfere with navigation. Wheels and traps are stationary appliances and before they can be erected must secure a permit from the War Department, in charge of navigation of our rivers. Thus, under this section traps and wheels could fish the entire 24 hours. Traps and wheels are built more or less upon the principle of a cattle corral, the fish striking fences or leads projecting into the river, follow them and are lead into the tunnel of the trap and then into the pot, from which they cannot escape. The fence or lead of the fishwheel leads the fish into the mouth of the wheel, when the wheel ceaselessly turning with the aid of the flowing stream, pumps the salmon into a box, for the owner to take away once in every 24 hours.

The gill nets, however, against which this section is directed, are drifting nets, on a submerged sandbar one moment, in the channel the next. They catch fish by gilling them, that is the salmon strike the net and put their heads into a mesh, when they cannot retreat, their gills preventing retreat and their bodies being too large to allow them to get through the mesh. Salmon only gill when the water is muddy in freshet time or at nights. When the salmon can see the gill net they swim around it. A gill net is only fished at slack tides, on an average six hours out of every 24 hours. A gill net further, to be worked properly must be tanned once a week and dried, which takes from one to two days. Thus a gill net fishes only from 30 to 36 hours out of the 168 hours of every week, while the traps and wheels, stationary appliances, fish day and night, the entire 168 hours in every week, as long as the fishing season lasts.

Thus this section would drive 4000 of our gill net fishermen from their calling, destroy their property and make in a few years a dozen or so already very rich fishwheel owners manifold millionaires, without protecting our salmon, because the fishwheels in the narrows and at the falls

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do not permit fish to pass by.

Year by year these wheels have been so located and improved that where only four years ago the Washington and Oregon up-river hatcheries secured some 20,000 salmon for hatchery purposes, this year but a few hundred were caught. Washington has closed its four up-river hatcheries and Oregon is doing likewise.

The hatcheries below The Dalles according to official data are doing fairly well, considering that this was a poor salmon year.

Section 2, prohibiting fishing for salmon between the first day of October and the 21st day of December of each year, is absolutely valueless as far as our Royal Chinook salmon are concerned, as this variety almost entirely ceases entering the Columbia the latter part of September, or the middle of October during a late Chinook season. The blueback salmon, almost absolutely destroyed by the fishwheels, run in June and July. Our silver salmon enter the river in October, November and December and if the fishwheels were allowed on the Oregon side, they with their leads would drive in the narrow of the Upper Columbia the fish from the Oregon shore to try to find easy ascent close to the Washington shore, where the wheels and seines owned by the same men who own wheels and seines on the Oregon shore, would catch the fish. This section is rather a clever trick on the part of the fishwheel owners. Fishing for silver salmon on the Oregon side would be stopped, where the river is from 4 to 6 miles wide and where the fish have a fair show to get by fishing appliances. Then where they get to the narrows and falls, the places of ascent on the Oregon side would be barred by the leads of the wheels and a rich harvest reaped on the Washington side by the wheelowners.

The most destructive fishwheels are on the Oregon side of the Upper Columbia. Stoppage of fishing from the mouth of the Sandy and up would abolish these wheels. Then Wash-

ington would followed with like legislation.

Section 3 provides that all fishing for salmon shall absolutely stop below a line drawn from Smith's Point across the Columbia. That is fishing with gill nets must stop from Astoria to the sea, about 12 miles from the bar, where the river is from 4 to 6 miles wide; where fishing with those nets only average from 30 to 36 hours out of the 168 hours in each week; where about 75 per cent of the gill net fishermen drift with their nets, because in the Columbia from Astoria and up the fish traps have driven the gill netters from their old-time drifting grounds. Another trick to give the salmon to the rich trapmen and wheelmen.

Some men, noting that yearly some fishermen were drowned at and outside the mouth of the Columbia, have declared out of misplaced sympathy with the fishermen that gill net fishing should stop at a line crossing the river at Cape Disappointment. The fishwheelmen have in section 3 advanced this line nine miles up the river to Smith Point. The almost absurd trickery here again is plain.

Section 4, by limiting length of nets in another intended humbug on the voters. The fishwheels could continue serenely as they now are to catch every salmon getting to the Upper Columbia and the gill netters, the poor men, would be so regulated that they would have to quit the Columbia.

Section 5, providing for a weekly 24 hour closed season would be of value if the fishwheels were abolished. It is the nature of the salmon to travel, once they enter the Columbia, about 8 miles in 24 in their effort to reach the spawning grounds, until

they reach the narrows and falls. There they rest for several days in the pools below the narrows and falls and after having overcome one set of obstructions, again rest for several days. With the fishwheels stretched out as they are, not one salmon in a thousand reaching the upper river would escape the upper most wheels. A 24-hour weekly closing law would simply give more fish to the rich fishwheel owners.

It is absolutely necessary for the preservation of our salmon that fishing must stop where the river becomes narrow. Every nation and State owning salmon streams had to adopt this policy, or see its salmon destroyed. Canada does not permit any stationary fishing appliances in its rivers and draws dead-lines against all fishing away below head of tide. California, Oregon and Washington forbid stationary appliances in their rivers and draw dead-lines against fishing where the rivers become narrow. The Federal Government, through a decision rendered December last by Secretary of Commerce and Labor Straus and confirmed by President Roosevelt, has adopted this principle for Alaska.

The only exception to this beneficial legislation is the Columbia River, where the fishwheel owners so far have succeeded in retaining their unfair monopoly.

But these men know this monopoly is doomed; they know that the vote of the people will tell them next June, "Stop destroying our Columbia River industry," and so they got up this so apparent sham bill. Verily, "Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad."

Let the fishwheels be abolished by the passage of the bill presented by the Columbia River Salmon Protective Association and the fishermen will be the first to urge our Legislature to enact a Sunday-closing law, fairer regulation of open and closed seasons and other laws really protective of the salmon fisheries of the Columbia.

The fishermen possess only their skill as fishermen and their boats and

nets. With the destruction of our salmon, their means of earning a living for themselves and their families is destroyed. On the other hand the dozen rich fishwheel owners own splendid farms and real estate in our cities. They and their children do not depend on the salmon for a living, all these men now care for is to have a few more years of absolute monopoly on that portion of our seed fish.

We therefore ask the voters to vote "No" on the fishwheel owner's bill and to vote "Yes" on the bill which stops fishing at head of tide, at the confluence of the Columbia with the Sandy.

H. M. LORNTSEN,  
 Secretary Columbia River Salmon Protective Association.

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Basil Kimberg and Matt Puskalla, of Deep River, are visiting Astoria.

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