

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 19.

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE OF
THE UNITED STATES:

Your memorialists, the Legislature of the Territory of Alaska, in second regular session assembled, do most respectfully represent:

Whereas, the fresh fish business at present constitutes the greatest source of wealth and commerce in South-eastern Alaska, and is the means of building along our shores the homes of thousands engaged in the taking of fish for the markets of our United States; and

Whereas, the people of the Territory feel that this source of wealth and industry must be conserved, fostered, perpetuated, retained and controlled to the end that the people resident in said Territory may have the fullest benefit therefrom; and

Whereas, by an Order in Council made at Ottawa, Canada, on March 12, 1915, certain concessions are made to American fishermen and American fishing vessels calculated to divert all fresh fish shipments to the foreign port of Prince Rupert, B. C., for re-shipment in bond over the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway through Canada to the Eastern markets of the United States, thereby taking away not only the business, which is the main support of a considerable portion of our coast population but will be the means of moving to a foreign port, the homes of hundreds of seamen and fishermen engaged by the North Pacific, together with the American fish buyers. Thus an American industry will be utilized to build up a Canadian port, without benefit to any portion of the American fishing fleet in the waters of Alaska and the United States, yet at a great loss to Alaska. Said order in council reads as follows, to-wit:

“File No. 82704

DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMS.

Ottawa, March 12th, 1915.

The Collector of Customs,
Prince Rupert, B. C.

Sir:

By Order in Council of the 9th of March, 1915, it is provided as follows:

During the present calendar year (1915), foreigners or foreign corporations bringing fresh fish in vessels registered in the United States of America to any port in British Columbia shall be permitted to land such fresh fish at such port without payment of duties and transship the same in bond to any port in the United States, or to sell such fish in bond to such local dealer or dealers as may be properly and duly licensed therefor, under the regulations and conditions hereinafter mentioned, which dealer or dealers shall export the same in compliance with the bonding requirements (without the right, however, in either instance, to sell in Canada for consumption therein, or otherwise except in bond, any of such fresh fish so landed); and such foreigners or foreign corporation bringing fresh fish in vessels registered in the United States of America to any port in British Columbia shall be permitted to purchase supplies, and ship crews for such vessels, at any port in the said Province of British Columbia, the whole under regulations and conditions as the Minister of Customs may determine.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) John McDougald,
Commissioner of Customs.”

Whereas, the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to Prince Rupert, together with the elastic Canadian laws, has brought about a condition which eliminates the expense incident to marketing fresh fish at distant Puget Sound ports, but strikes a vital blow at the permanent settlement of our coast sections, inasmuch as

our fishermen will remove to Prince Rupert and their vessels will outfit there, and thus certain sections of Alaska will be depopulated and our business interests suffer accordingly;

Therefore, this Legislature appeals to you, and if beyond your power, through you to the Congress of the United States, for relief and protection from a condition over which this Legislature has no control, but which, if not checked, will bring untold disaster to the business development and progress of this Territory.

While Alaska has no transcontinental rail connection, our fresh shipping ports are but a few hours, by steamer, distant from Prince Rupert. We believe that Congress can remedy the condition that now exists by offering inducements to American fishermen to reside at and land their fares at Alaskan ports and thereby cause the transcontinental roads to give our ports terminal rates, with a service that would permit direct shipment from Alaska to our Eastern markets. Thus the vast value of our fisheries would become a real asset, and be the means of building up American instead of foreign ports, and this without increasing the cost to the consuming public.

It has not been possible for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to divert the Commerce of Alaska through Canada except through the support and co-operation of the Canadian Government.

May we not look to you for assistance in this matter; for regulation, if possible, which will prevent a foreign Government, by its elastic laws, taking from our people that which, by reasonable Governmental regulation, ought to be reserved to the people of Alaska and the United States.

We therefore respectfully suggest that a method adopted by Governments other than ours for the upbuilding of their fisheries in the past whereby a bounty to men and a per tonnage bounty to vessels was paid to those engaged in the industry be given consideration by Congress.

For your favorable consideration of this subject, so important to us, we, your memorialists, will ever pray.

Passed the Senate, April 27, 1915.

Passed the House, April 28, 1915.