

University of Oklahoma College of Law

University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons

American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899

1-23-1893

Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, in response to Senate Resolution of January 19, 1893, transmitting a report on the salmon fisheries of Alaska.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/indianserialset>



Part of the [Indigenous, Indian, and Aboriginal Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

S. Exec. Doc. No. 31, 52nd Cong., 2nd Sess. (1893)

This Senate Executive Document is brought to you for free and open access by University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899 by an authorized administrator of University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact Law-LibraryDigitalCommons@ou.edu.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

IN RESPONSE

To Senate Resolution of January 19, 1893, transmitting a report on the salmon fisheries of Alaska.

JANUARY 24, 1893.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., January 23, 1893.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the resolution, dated the 19th instant, wherein I am directed to transmit to the Senate a copy of the report of the special agent having in charge the protection of the salmon fisheries of Alaska, and in reply to transmit herewith copy of a report on the subject, dated the 19th instant, and its original inclosures of Special Agent Max Pracht.

Respectfully, yours,

CHARLES FOSTER,
Secretary.

HON. LEVI P. MORTON,
Vice-President of the United States.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 19, 1893.*

SIR: In accordance with the terms of my instructions, dated August 10, 1892, I have the honor to submit herewith a statement of my work for the partial season of 1892.

A more extended report was made impracticable by the lateness of the action of Congress in making the necessary appropriation for the protection of the salmon fisheries of Alaska; the delay thus enforced upon the agent made it impossible to leave for the scene of my labors until the sailing of the September steamer for Alaska.

Immediately upon my arrival at Sitka, I caused to be published a "notice to packers of salmon within the district of Alaska," securing 300 extra copies of the issue of the newspaper containing it, and the same has been placed in the hands of every owner, agent, or manager having connection with the salmon fisheries of Alaska. The same is herewith attached, marked Appendix A.

By rapid traveling made possible by my thorough knowledge of the numerous waterways, I succeeded in visiting all but two of the canneries operated in southeast Alaska during the past season, having pre-arranged meetings with the managers of those that I was not able to reach before the cessation of active operations.

BARRICADES AND OBSTRUCTIONS.

Within the letter and the spirit of the law, barricades or other obstructions, such as are described in the act of Congress approved March 2, 1889, copy of which is hereby attached (see Department Circular No. 131, Appendix A), were reported to me to have existed in a number of streams, and evidences of such having been removed previous to my visit, were found by me at a number of points. Without exception, all the responsible managers cited to me that if the law was impartially enforced the corporations having the larger interests would hail the result with satisfaction, and the assurance from the agent that all would be brought within the strict pale of the law led to general acquiescence.

In the larger streams, such as the Stikine, Unuk, Taku, Chilkoot, and Chilkat, effective barricades are a practical impossibility; where tried, the forces of nature, such as drift and freshets, have carried them out. In several of these streams, traps connected with the shore have been used; but, as such have not extended into or beyond the channel, no obstruction can be said to have been maintained. In arriving at this conclusion, I have the advice of the United States attorney, Hon. Charles S. Johnson, Sitka, to whom was referred the case of the alleged obstruction of the Chilkat River.

In the smaller streams, however, the partial or complete obstruction, by means of fences, dams, fish wheels, or traps, has been more successfully maintained, and, while all such operated by white men had been removed previous to my expected arrival, the evidences to me were conclusive as to their previous existence. In most instances, the fact being known that an officer to enforce the law was appointed was sufficient to cause a hasty removal of all such obstructions as were unlawful, and I am led to believe that for the latter part of the season the salmon had unrestricted passage to the lakes which constitute their breeding grounds and which find their outlet to the ocean through the smaller, clear-water streams.

The most successful obstructionists of these small salmon rivers are the natives themselves. Those having proprietary rights to a salmon "chuck" find no difficulty in disposing of all the salmon they may deliver at the nearest canning establishment, and with them the first move is to barricade the stream a short distance above its mouth, or just above the confluence of the tides with the current, so that seining for the mass of fish struggling to ascend the river is a matter of little labor and productive, to the native fishermen, of desirable results. To reach these violators of the law is practically impossible. The natives are mostly impecunious and the collection of a fine is impracticable to a degree.

In this connection and also to enable the officer having charge of this work to reach the more numerous and irresponsible violators of a law which they do not entirely comprehend, it is, in my opinion, necessary to revise and amend the law so that an alternative punishment by means of imprisonment can be inflicted by the court. I am led to believe, as the result of formal interviews with several representatives of more pretentious establishments than those controlled by the natives, that the payment of the fine of \$250 imposed by the present law would not be considered an insuperable hardship, and that in the height of the "run" it would be to their advantage to pay the fine, "if convicted," rather than lose the fish.

As to the possibilities of conviction under the present jury system of Alaska, I will leave the prosecuting attorney to speak for himself. My own previous experience has led me into the belief that in cases where the United States is the plaintiff the average Alaska jury is for the defense.

FISH HATCHERIES.

Several of the more experienced fishermen have attempted the propagation of salmon in the streams entirely controlled by them, and others are said to be anxious to provide for their future wants by a system of spawn-hatching if the Government will sanction their means and methods. Application to the special agent in charge for permission could only result in a reference to the law, which, if interpreted literally and enforced impartially, would prevent the maintenance of the necessary dams in the hatching streams. A typical hatchery of this class has been in operation at the works of Calbreath & Co., at Point Ellis, on Kuiu Island, Chatham Straits, which can best be described as follows:

A dam has been constructed at a point just above extreme high tide, with a second dam a short distance above it, with access thereto by a suitable passageway, so that a person standing upon the lower dam, armed with a scoop net, can dip up the desired salmon from below and readily transfer them into the stream above the upper or second dam, beyond which there are no further obstructions, and the fish are left undisturbed to finish their journey to their breeding waters, never far removed.

It is estimated that out of 500 female salmon, to which must be added the requisite number of milsters, there will be fry enough to furnish all the adult salmon required for such a cannery as the one operated by them (since burned), estimated at 15,000 cases of 48 tins each, holding one pound each, and yet make provision for the loss of young and adult fish from natural causes before it is time for them to return to propagate their kind in turn. There is much force in the assertion on the part of experienced fishermen that the unrestricted passage upstream of the hordes of ravenous trout, which always follow the run of salmon, is productive of more damage to the issue of the breeding salmon than all other causes combined, and that by a system of hatcheries, such as devised and operated at Point Ellis, the trout will not be able to ascend the streams and a much larger percentage of the ova will hatch out.

THE SALMON AND HIS ENEMIES.

Beginning with the trout, which follows the breeding salmon into the mountain streams and lakes in which he delights, the course of life for

the salmon is uncertain and erratic. His enemies are numerous, and each in its way more than his match. If the male salmon succeeds in fighting off the trout and protects his mate while she deposits the ova in some apparently secure crevice in the rocks or in a hole scooped out of the bottom gravel with his battered nose, and again covered from sight, it is not yet safe from the marauding instinct of the sea gull and the pernicious search of the "saw-bill" duck. If escaping both of these, and in the early days of spring, the bunches of young fry, playing upon the surface of the water while drifting out to sea, escape the frequent dives of the kingfisher, they are in danger of being gulped by the schools of herring which come up into some of the estuaries to meet them; or, if by maneuvering along the shore in the reeds and grasses, a portion manages to escape these heretofore unheard-of enemies, more of them are destined to help make a dainty meal for the sea bass, whose upward rush scatters the terrified little shiners, whose number is reduced at each successive running of the guntlet.

Once out to sea, lurking in the protecting fastnesses afforded by the rocks, the young salmon is not yet out of danger, furnishing food for the "big fish," not excepting the members of his own immediate family. Having escaped the teeth of his own kind, and grown to a size affording protection as against them, we might follow him to the feeding grounds or banks, where shark and dogfish feast upon him, and the members of the seal family are in unremitting pursuit. These enemies of the salmon follow the schools, when at the age of 4 years they are impelled by instinct and the promptings of nature to seek a fresh-water stream for purposes of reproduction, and when caught in the gill net of the fisherman unable to flee, gorge themselves upon his delicate flesh. In addition to these, the birds of the air and beasts of the forests lay in wait for him as he appears in the shallows of the streams; the eagle, raven, crow, and hawk swoop down upon him from above; and the otter steals upon him from his hole in the rocks; the bear wades out among them and with a flip of his fore foot throws them out on the shore, there to be devoured at leisure. It would certainly seem that when this valuable fish has to contend with so many natural enemies, the superior skill of man should be held in restraint and wise legislation for his protection be enforced.

THE SALMON PACK OF 1892.

The entire pack of salmon for the District of Alaska for the season just closed is, as is shown by the tables in Appendix B, 457,969 cases, 15,252 barrels, and 4,245 half-barrels of salted whole salmon; and of salted bellies, 35 barrels and 36 half-barrels. In ordinary parlance, it requires 3 barrels of salmon to produce 1 barrel of bellies.

As it will be seen, the total value of the aggregate pack at the market prices ruling in San Francisco, the principal port of distribution, is \$2,064,340.05.

Based upon an average of cost of \$2.73 per case and \$6 per barrel (200 pounds to the barrel), and \$11 for bellies, the profits of the industry, while not excessive, are for the season just passed fair and satisfactory, and several establishments heretofore conducted at a loss are presumptively able to realize dividends this season. Among other causes leading to this result are to be mentioned the reduction in operating expenses brought about by the more economical management incident to co-operation, through a board of trustees known as the Alaska Packers'

Association, and a very considerable falling off in the pack of the British Columbia canneries, which has resulted in a better market and larger demand abroad. Of these markets England and Australia are the principal ones.

TIN PLATE.

Tin plate, which enters so largely into the cost account of tinned salmon, was sold and delivered cheaper to the consumer for the season of 1892 than for the two seasons previous, and contracts for deliveries for the season of 1893 have been made upon a still lower basis, as will be seen by a reference.

Lowest reported price for season (duty paid, delivered at San Francisco and Astoria):

1891.	\$6. 80
1892.	5. 82½
1893.	5. 72

ALIEN LABOR.

A large percentage of the labor employed in the principal establishments is noncitizen. British Columbia and Europe furnish some, but the larger proportion are Chinese. The latter are employed principally in work requiring great manual dexterity, such as making cans, filling cans, labeling and packing. In some few cases Chinese contractors employ native or Indian labor, and in a few minor instances natives do all the work usually done by the Chinese, but on the whole the system of contracting with a responsible Chinese firm for a certain number of "hands" or to put up a pack of a specified minimum number of cases for the season meets with the most approval. The introduction of improved machinery, which has taken the place of much hand work, such as can soldering, and can filling, has brought the business within such limits as to have a restrictive operation upon the tendency to "strike." The native fisherman has not been slow to avail himself of the strike method as taught him by the more irresponsible European laborers, but the coöperative management has apparently had a depressing effect, and during the season just passed no strikes were reported.

SALMON STREAMS HELD BY ALIENS.

During the past season some difficulties arose among the native fishermen and a party of fishermen from British Columbia headed by an educated half-breed from Victoria. Complaint being made to me, I referred the matter to the United States attorney for his action and his decision has had the tendency to discourage any further irruption of like character. Upon this matter I also corresponded with the Treasury Department, and in Appendix "C" will be found a copy of the correspondence.

FISHING INDUSTRIES OTHER THAN SALMON.

While salmon heads the list as among the productive food fishes of Alaska, it is by no means the only profitable industry. A further reference to the tables, Appendix "D," shows the catch of cod as reported by the two concerns engaged in this industry. Explorations by the United States Fish Commission steamer *Albatross* have

definitely located a number of "banks" greater in area than those of Newfoundland, upon which feed innumerable cod fish of good size and superior flavor, and it needs but a market within reach of the distributing point of San Francisco to insure a permanent and ample supply.

As compared with the fisheries of the Atlantic banks, those of the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea are to all intents and purposes to be preferred. The dangers to the fishermen are but few. The loss of a dory or a man is so infrequent, and the climatic conditions so favorable, as to reduce the risk to a minimum. Much of the fishing is conducted from shore stations, located in snug harbors. The men are comfortably provided for and well paid. A reduction in freights such as would ensue from the completion of an interoceanic canal would, in my estimation, place at the disposal of the millions of the people of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains the delicious quality and inestimable quantity of the Alaskan codfish.

OTHER FISHING INDUSTRIES.

Many of the inlets and lagoons to which access is had from the straits, sounds, and gulf of the Alexander Archipelago are, in their season, full of herring, smelt, and capelin, and they all have their share in the furnishing of the larders of the Alaskan housekeeper. There is but one concern engaged in the business of preparing marketable product from such sources—the Alaska Oil and Guano Company, located at Killisnoo, Admiralty Island—and the productions of this concern, such as herring, oil, and fish guano, find a ready sale in the United States, Hawaiian Islands, and quite recently shipments by means of sailing vessels have been made direct to England. As a fertilizer the guano is said to be superior to all others in the production of sugar cane, while the oil can be used by special preparation for all the ordinary purposes to which linseed oil is put in the preparation of paints.

The output of this concern for the season is given in Appendix E.

HALIBUT FISHERIES.

Nearly all the inshore banks and sheltered bays contain halibut in large quantities, and sporadic efforts have been made to find a market for them. Canning has not met with success, but such would come into demand were the salmon output much reduced below the present limit. The fish when so prepared is delicate and toothsome. An occasional schooner has secured a load of fresh halibut, packing same in ice obtained from the near-by glaciers, meeting with more or less success by shipping same in refrigerator cars from ports on Puget Sound direct to New York and Boston.

Sun-dried or smoked halibut is a staple article of food for the native Alaskan during the winter months, and salted napes and fins are esteemed a delicacy by the Caucasian epicure. Some day in the future the halibut of Alaska may supply the place of the Greenland article now sold in the Atlantic States. The difference in the rate of freights, when same are more nicely adjusted to competing circumstances, may safely be met by the fact that halibut fishing in Alaskan waters may be pursued with safety and comparative comfort during the entire season. Some recently discovered grounds in and about Cordova Bay

and Dixons Entrance, along the southern extremity of Prince of Wales Island, have excited attention, and at this time of writing a steam schooner (*Francis Cutting*) is taking a fare, and the visit may result in the establishment of a station at or near Cape Muzon.

EULACHON OR CANDLE FISH.

This peculiar fish, a member of the smelt family, has achieved a world-wide reputation as the candle fish of the Northwest Indians, and derived its peculiar cognomen from the fact that when sun-dried or smoked it is so rich and oily that the application of flame to one end will cause it to burn as would a piece of pitch pine or "light wood."

A few years ago a considerable quantity was smoked and shipped by a firm then located at old Fort Tongass, but the difficulty in obtaining same in the waters of Naas River, the same being in British Columbia, made the venture unprofitable. A small quantity is put up in salt pickle, upon orders, and the natives of the southern end of the Alaskan pan-handle secure by purchase and barter from the Tsimpsonian Indians of British Columbia a considerable quantity of Eulachon "grease," which takes the place of lard in their domestic economy. At infrequent periods this fish has been known to ascend the Stikine, Unuk, and Chilkat rivers, and may frequently be met with among the natives at Fort Wrangel, Juneau, and vicinity. Its peculiarity in selecting only *glacial* rivers in its spawning migrations, and the fact that it can be caught only by the insertion of small mesh gill nets through holes in the ice during the month of February, tend to make it exclusive and expensive. As the Eulachon "grease" is extracted by a system of putrefaction, its presence in a native house is indicated to the European nostril while he be yet afar off.

In addition to the foregoing, not less than 10,000 gallons of dog fish oil, so-called, produced from the liver of the dog fish and shark, was extracted by the natives and sent to market through the medium of the trading store. This oil, because of its heavy body and freedom from grit, is a most desirable lubricant, and finds among the logging camps of the Puget Sound region a profitable market as "skid grease." With improved facilities, such as may be assumed will be at the service of the special agent during the season of 1893, an exact report of this industry may be expected, and for the season of 1892 the sum of \$3,000 can safely be added to the amount heretofore reported, making a grand total of \$2,257,939.55 received from the various fishing industries of Alaska, as follows:

Salmon.....	\$2,064,340.00
Codfish.....	104,062.00
Herring oil and guano, salted herring.....	86,537.50
Dog-fish oil.....	3,000.00

2,257,939.55

Respectfully submitted.

MAX PRACHT,

Special Agent for the protection of Alaskan Salmon Fisheries.

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

APPENDIX A.

NOTICE TO PACKERS OF SALMON WITHIN THE DISTRICT OF ALASKA.

In conformity with instructions from the Treasury Department; I desire to refer all firms or persons engaged in the taking of salmon within the limits of the district of Alaska to the following:

[Circular.—1892. Department No. 131, division of special agents.]

PROTECTION OF THE SALMON FISHERIES OF ALASKA.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., August 10, 1892.

To the officers of the customs in the Territory of Alaska, and all other persons concerned:

The attention of the collector of customs and all officers of the United States in the Territory of Alaska, as well as all other persons concerned, is called to the terms of an act of Congress approved March 2, 1892, wherein it is provided: "That the erection of dams, barricades, and other obstructions in any of the rivers of Alaska, with the purpose or result of preventing or impeding the ascent of salmon or other anadromous species to their spawning grounds, is hereby declared to be unlawful, and the Secretary of the Treasury is hereby authorized and directed to establish such regulations and surveillance as may be necessary to insure that this prohibition is strictly enforced and to otherwise protect the salmon fisheries of Alaska; and every person who shall be found guilty of a violation of the provisions of this section shall be fined not less than \$250 for each day of the continuance of such obstruction," and also to an act approved March 3, 1891, entitled "An act to repeal timber-culture laws and for other purposes," which provides that the United States reserves the right to regulate the taking of salmon, and to do all other things necessary to protect and prevent the destruction of salmon in all the waters of the lands granted under said act and frequented by salmon.

Officers of the customs service and officers appointed to enforce the provisions of the law referred to are hereby directed to report all cases of infraction of said laws to the United States Attorney for the District of Alaska, with a view to the prosecution of offenders.

A. B. NETTLETON,
Acting Secretary.

And also to the following extracts from the letter of instructions accompanying my appointment:

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., August 10, 1892.

MR. MAX PRACHT,
Washington, D. C.

SIR: Having been appointed as a special agent for the preservation of the salmon fisheries in Alaska, you are informed that it will be your duty to ascertain and report the location of every salmon cannery or saltery in Alaska; the capacity of the same in cases, barrels, half-barrels and kits; the pack in full for each season; the number of boxes of tin consumed and the cost of same, the number of employes in each cannery or saltery, and the total thereof, segregating whites, natives, Chinese, etc., male and female, adults and minors, and whether citizens or aliens. You should also include in said report the cod fish, herring, herring oil and guano, and other such industries.

I inclose herewith for your information a copy of a circular this date, relating to the provisions of the 1st section of the act approved March 2, 1892, entitled "An act to provide for the protection of the salmon fisheries of Alaska." It will be your duty to enforce the provisions of said act, and to warn all persons who have erected dams, or barricades, or other obstructions to remove the same forthwith, and in default thereof, you will report all the facts with the proper proofs to the United States attorney for prosecution.

At the close of the season you will submit a full report of your labors and the result of your observations under these instructions, with such recommendations as you may deem advisable. Your official station will be Sitka.

Respectfully, yours,

A. B. NETTLETON,
Acting Secretary.

A copy of the above "circular" having been properly addressed to the person in charge of every cannery and saltery within the limits of the district, and the same consigned to the custody of the U. S. mails to be forwarded, all such are hereby informed that such is considered sufficient for purposes of "warning" and that proceedings in prosecution will be instituted against all persons found to be violating the law.

MAX PRACHT,
Special Agent in Charge.

SITKA, ALASKA, *September 20, 1892.*

APPENDIX B.

Alaska salmon pack—season of 1892.

[Collated by Max Pracht, special agent.]

Name of company.	Location of works.	Total pack for season of 1892.				Employés and their compensation.													Boxes of tin plate consumed.					
		Barrels of 200 pounds each.		Half barrels of 100 pounds each.		White.					Natives.					Chinese.								
		Cases of 48 pounds each, or 4 dozen cans.	Whole fish.	Bellies.	Whole fish.	Bellies.	Male adults.	Days employed.	Compensation per month.	With board.	Without board.	Transportation to and from work.	Male adults.	Days employed.	Rate per day of 10 hours.	Female adults.	Days employed.	Rate per day of 10 hours.	Children.	Days employed.	Rate per day of 10 hours.	Compensation per case.	Number employed.	Number.
Alaska Packing Co	Nushagak River, Bristol Bay.	31,500				60	135	\$65	Yes	Yes	45	90	\$1.50								\$0.40	95	3,387	\$5.90
Alaska Salmon Packing and Fur Co.	Loring, Naha Bay	22,000				20	33	149	65	Yes	Yes	10	100	1.50	5	.85	\$1	5		\$0.75	.40	48	2,800	5.90
Alaska Coast Packing Co.*	Kadiak Island.			4	625																			
Alaska Oil and Guano Co.s	Killisnoo, Admiralty Island.																				.40	60	2,250	5.90
Arctic Packing Co	Allak and Karluk (2 stations).	21,000	400			33	141	65	Yes	Yes	15	90	1.50											
Do	Naknek	1,650				12	135	45	Yes	Yes														
Do	Cook Inlet.																							
Alutian Islands Fishing and Manufacturing Co.*	Kadiak Island.																							
Bering Sea Packing Co.s	Bristol Bay	31,500				60	135	65			40	90	1.50	10	60		1				.40	90	3,395	5.90
Bristol Bay Packing Co.	Redfish Bay, Baranoff Island.	10,400				7	90	75	Yes		19	90	1.50	6	60		1				.45	21	1,100	6.15
Baranoff Packing Co	Glacier Bay																							
Bartlett Bay Packing Co.*	Glacier Bay																							
Boston Fishing and Trading Co.	Yes Bay, Behm Channel	13,744	15			17	120	45	Yes	Yes	10	120	1.50	7	90	1	4	90	.75	.44	.31	1,845		(5.82) (5.95) (6.00)
Cape Lees Packing Co.*	Burrongs Bay																				.41	50	3,100	5.90
Chilkat Packing Co.	Chilkat River Inlet	31,500				90	150	\$35	Yes	Yes											.44	47	2,430	6.10
Chilkat Canning Co.	do	22,500				50	120	35	Yes	Yes											.40	140	5,358	5.90
Chignik Bay Packing Co.	Chignik Bay	50,000				60	153	65	Yes	Yes	20	100	1.50											
Chignik Bay Co.*	do																							
Central Alaska Co.*	Cook Inlet																							

Alaska salmon pack—season of 1892—Continued.

RECAPITULATION.

Cases packed, 457,969, at \$4.20	\$1,923,469.80
Barrels salted, 15,252, at \$8	122,016.00
Half barrels salted, 4,245, at \$4.25	18,041.25
Barrels of bellies salted, 35, at \$15	525.00
Half barrels of bellies salted, 36, at \$8	288.00
Total	2,064,340.05
Tin plate consumed (49,259 boxes, 108 pounds each)	pounds.. 5,317.812
Value of tin plate, duty paid, \$291,660.60; duty at 2.2 cents per pound	\$116,991.86
Average cost per box, duty paid, for the season of 1892	5.92.33
Average cost of canned salmon, per case of 4 dozen, in 1 pound tins, delivered at San Francisco	2.73

NOTES.—Size of sheet of tin plate, 14 by 20 inches; 112 sheets (108 pounds) to a box. A box of tin makes 448 cans. The cost, as reported, is duty paid at San Francisco, Astoria, or at the works. The rate of duty is 2.2 cents per pound, or \$2.376 per box. The amount of drawback allowed upon exportation equals about 25 cents per case, or \$2 per box of tin.

APPENDIX C.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., January 16, 1893.

SIR: Referring to your report of the 2d ultimo, in relation to disputed claims upon Alaska fishery locations and particularly to your inquiry whether or not aliens may claim and hold salmon fisheries or control streams that carry salmon in Alaska, I enclose herewith for your information copy of an opinion, dated the 28th ultimo, of the Acting Solicitor of the Treasury, to whom the subject was referred.

Respectfully, yours,

O. L. SPAULDING,
Acting Secretary.

Mr. MAX PRACHT,
Special Agent, Sitka, Alaska.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR OF TREASURY,
Washington, D. C., November 23, 1892.

SIR: Inquiry is made by Special Agent Max Pracht, "whether aliens can claim and hold salmon fisheries, or control streams that carry salmon, in Alaska?"

In reply to your reference of said inquiry, I have to advise you that aliens have no such right. Besides, Congress has reserved to the United States the exclusive right to regulate the taking of salmon, and to prevent the destruction of salmon, in Alaska. See section 14, act of March 3, 1891 (26 Stat., p. 1095), and act of March 2, 1889. (25 Stat., p. 1005).

The letter referred to is herewith returned.

Very respectfully,

F. A. REEVE,
Acting Solicitor.

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

APPENDIX D.

Codfish industry of Alaska.

[Collated by Max Pracht, special agent.]

Name of company and stations and trading posts.	Name of vessels employed.	Fish caught.	Weight.		Value per ton.	Total value.	Other products (tongues and sounds).	Value per barrel.	Cod-liver oil.*
			Green.	Dry.					
The McCollam Fishing and Trading Co.:			<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>			<i>Bbls.</i>		
Shumagin Islands, five stations; principal store, Pirate Cove.	Schooner Czarina, (three trips during season.)	210,000 240,000 83,000	344 365 150	310 330 135	\$50 50 50	\$94,350	53 60 20	\$20 20 20
Okhotsk Sea, station at Petropaulovski.	Schooner Hera.....	125,000	256	225	50	(†)	58	20
Lynde and Hough Co.:									
Sand Point, Popoff Island..	Schooner Venture..								
Unga, Junga	Barkentine Fremont								
Nelson Island, Sanak Group	Barkentine J. A. Falkenburg.								
Company Harbor, Sanak Island.	Schooner John Hancock.	655,000	985	887	50	(†)	†166	†12
Ikatuk Station, Ikatuk Peninsula.	Schooner Arago....								
New Station, Henderson Island.									
Squaw Harbor, Red Cove; Salmon stations.							135	20

* Report not ready.

† Included in the above figures.

‡ Pickled fish.

NOTE.—Pack of 500 barrels included in the salmon statistics.

Number of men employed and compensation.

Total fishermen	142
Lay per 1,000 fish (including transportation and subsistence):	
Shumagin group	\$27.50
Other stations	25.00
Dress gang, per month	25.00
Splitters, per month	60.00
Salters, per month	50.00

RECAPITULATION.

Total value of dried codfish	\$94,350
Total value of pickled codfish	1,992
Total value of tongues and sounds	6,520
Total value of oil	1,200
Total	104,062

APPENDIX E.

Alaska herring fisheries.

[Statistics collated by Max Pracht, special agent.]

Corporation	Alaska Oil and Guano Co.
Location	Killisnoo, Admiralty Island.
Herring caught	89,220 barrels.
Product:	
242,050 gallons oil, at 25 cents	\$60,512.50
810 tons guano, at \$27.50	22,275.00
1,000 half barrels salted herring	3,750.00
Total	86,537.50
Employés:	
White (including mechanics and crews of steamers)	49
Natives (including fishermen and refinery operatives)	45
Chinese (mess-house cooks)	5
Duration of season, five months (August to November, inclusive).	