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BC COMMERCIAL FISHERIES BRANCH

Correspondence re issuance of licenses to Japanese, 1946

PABC
GR 1378
Box 8 File 7

1 9 4 6
Nov. 22nd

Honourable H. F. G. Bridges,
Minister of Fisheries,
O t t a w a, O n t.

Dear Mr. Bridges:

Previous to 1940 the Provincial Government permitted persons of Japanese racial origin to operate only in one branch of fish-processing, namely, that of fish salteries, and only recently we have had a request for a licence to permit a Japanese to enter commercial fishing in the non-tidal waters of the Province. My colleagues and I firmly believe that it is not desirable to permit persons of Japanese racial origin to re-enter the fisheries of British Columbia, and the British Columbia Government intend to pursue a policy of non-issuance of licences under the Provincial Fisheries Act to persons of Japanese racial origin.

While the Provincial Government has authority and machinery through its licensing system to regulate and control the traffic and processing of fish within the Province, the matter of fishing licences comes under the authority of your Fisheries Department. For a number of years before the war your Department followed a policy of gradually eliminating or cutting down the number of fishing licences issued to Japanese, although in the immediate pre-war years this policy seems to have been at a standstill. At the commencement of the war in the Pacific, the percentage of fishing licences issued by your Department to fishermen of Japanese racial origin in British Columbia was in the neighborhood of 14% of the total number of licences issued.

Immediately after Pearl Harbour the Japanese were moved from the coast and the fishing vessels owned by Japanese were confiscated by the Government. The following year almost all of these vessels, except those required by the armed services, were back in the

fishing industry, manned by whites. At the present time, certain branches of the British Columbia fishing industry are considered to be over-crowded, and it is suggested by those in the industry that the Federal Government should limit the number of fishing licences. In the event of Japanese being permitted to return to the coast, the issuance of fishing licences permitting these people to re-enter the industry would only aggravate this condition.

In view of the Provincial Government's policy regarding the issuance of licences to Japanese, as outlined herein, and the other circumstances as briefly stated above, it is considered appropriate at this time to acquaint you with the attitude of the British Columbia Government and, at the same time, solicit your co-operation with us by requesting that no fishing licences be issued by your Department to persons of Japanese racial origin.

Yours very truly,

(L. H. Eyres)

Commissioner.

(Nov. 22/46 Copy sent to Asst. Commr. of Fisheries)
" This letter read to Executive Council by Minister and approved by them.

73 L

PHONE E 1111
LOCAL 447-448

THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

PROVINCIAL FISHERIES DEPARTMENT
VICTORIA

RECEIVED
NOV 18 1946
Commissioner of Fisheries

November 15, 1946.

MEMORANDUM

Commissioner of Fisheries,
BUILDINGS.

Please refer to my memorandum to the Commissioner of Fisheries, under date of August 17, 1946, wherein I refer to a conversation I had with the then Commissioner of Fisheries in respect to Government policy regarding the re-entry into the fisheries of the Province of persons of Japanese racial origin. I would also refer you to our recent conversation on this subject and have to advise that this Department has, as yet, received no instructions regarding Government policy in respect to Japanese. It was my understanding that Mr. Pearson intended to take up this matter with his colleagues but had not done so up to the time he relinquished the Commissionership of Fisheries.

The matter of Japanese in the fisheries of British Columbia is one over which the Provincial authority does not have exclusive jurisdiction. Insofar as actual fishing is concerned, the Federal Government is the authority for issuing fishing licences in the tidal waters of the Province. By an arrangement with the Federal Government, however, fishing in the non-tidal waters of the Province, such as the inland lakes, is under the authority of the Provincial Commissioner of Fisheries. The Provincial authority also has jurisdiction over the processing plants dealing in fishery products such as, salmon canneries, herring salteries, reduction plants, etc., etc.

Previous to Pearl Harbour the Provincial Government did issue licences to Japanese covering salt herring and salt salmon operations. These two products, as you are probably aware, are shipped to the Orient. It has been the policy

1947

of the Provincial Department of Fisheries to scrutinize applications for licences for different plant categories very carefully, particularly in the case of new applicants, in order to be sure that the applicant or the applicant company was white. We have been successful up until now in keeping the salmon and herring canning industries and the reduction industry free from Oriental influence. In other words, no licences under these categories have been issued to Japanese, or to whites fronting for Japanese.

As you will note from the correspondence attached to my memorandum of August 17th, there will be, no doubt, numerous applications, either direct from Japanese or from others on behalf of Japanese, for licences to operate under the various categories over which the Province has jurisdiction. I would appreciate being instructed as to Government policy in this regard.

In respect to fishing, as pointed out above, in the tidal waters of the Province this matter is entirely in the hands of the Federal Government and if it should be the desire of the Provincial Government to maintain a white fishing industry in the Province, I would respectfully suggest that the Province's wishes be made known to the highest authority in Ottawa at as early a date as is possible, in order that it may not be said by Ottawa that they were ignorant of the desires of the Provincial Government. At the present time the order adopted under the War Measures Act early in 1942 restraining the issue of fishing licences to persons of Japanese racial origin is still in effect under the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act of 1945. This order applies to licences to fish in the non-tidal waters of the Province, as well as the tidal waters, and so long as the order is in effect, no licence may issue. It is my understanding, however, that the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act is for a limited time and as soon as this time limit has expired, there will be no machinery to restrain the Federal Government, through its Department of Fisheries, from again issuing fishing licences to Japanese.

In view of the circumstances, I strongly urge that this matter receive the immediate attention of the Cabinet in order that (1) I may be instructed in respect to Government policy and, (2) that the Federal Government may be duly appraised of the

Provincial Government's wishes in respect to Japanese re-entry into our fisheries.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

Geo. J. Alexander,
Assistant Commissioner.

GJA:GC

79-E
E-3(a)-4

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES
OTTAWA

CANADA

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

RECEIVED
DEC 12 1946
Commissioner of Fisheries

December 6th, 1946.

E-10-2

Dear Mr. Eyres:

Your letter of November 22nd was received in my office sometime ago when I was absent on the East Coast, hence the delay in replying.

I have noted carefully your representations concerning the issuance of licenses to Japanese people and you may rest assured that I shall bring the same to the attention of the Government of Canada.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Yours sincerely,

H. Francis G. Bridges.

H. Francis G. Bridges.

The Honourable L. H. Eyres, M.L.A.,
Commissioner of Fisheries,
Victoria, B.C.

(Dec. 12/46 Copy sent to Asst.Commr.of Fisheries)

PHONE E 1111
LOCAL 447-448

THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

PROVINCIAL FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

VICTORIA

RECEIVED
AUG 2 - 1946
Commissioner of Fisheries

August 17, 1946.

F-57/46

MEMORANDUM

Commissioner of Fisheries,
BUILDING.

Further to our conversation of even date regarding Government policy in respect to the re-entry into the fisheries of the Province of persons of Japanese racial origin, I hand you herewith copies of correspondence between the Federal Department of Fisheries, the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce, Chief Supervisor of Fisheries and the Provincial Game Commission.

You will note that the original proposal made by the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce was to have issued to one, C. Nakamura, a licence to fish commercially in Shuswap Lake. On being advised that the Order of the British Columbia Security Commission prohibiting persons of the Japanese race from fishing in Canadian waters was still in effect under the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act of 1945, the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce then proposed to organize a company of white residents for the purpose of securing the necessary licence and turn the management of the company over to Mr. Nakamura. You will also note that this Department pointed out to the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce that such action would, in effect, be a circumvention of the present law of the country and for that reason, the proposal could not be entertained by the Department. You will note that the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce are apparently still working on the idea of re-establishing the Japanese in the fishing business there, by reference to the correspondence from the Game Commission under date of August 8th. In this case the approach is slightly different, in that the reason now given is the destruction of coarse fish in Shuswap Lake.

I am rather concerned owing to the particular wording of Mr. Butler's letter and feel that the matter has now reached the point where I should be instructed in respect to Government policy in regard to Japanese. You will note I have drawn to Mr. Butler's attention the fact that Government policy is involved and that no licence will issue by this Department until Government policy has been enunciated.

I shall be pleased to receive your instructions.

Respectfully submitted,

Geo. J. Alexander,
Assistant Commissioner.

GJA:GC
Encl.

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

Office of the Chief Supervisor,

Vancouver, B.C.

File 10-1-1

June 4, 1946

Dear Mr. Alexander:

Enclosed herewith please find communication under date of the 1st inst., received from the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce, regarding the proposal that ling and carp be taken commercially from the waters of Shuswap Lake. The enquirers have been informed that their request has been passed on to you.

Yours truly,

(Signed) J. A. Motherwell,

Chief Supervisor of Fisheries.

G. J. Alexander, Esq.,
Assistant Commissioner,
Prov. Fisheries Department,
Victoria, B. C.

COPY

SAIMON ARM AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
P.O. Drawer 171, Salmon Arm.

Salmon Arm, B. C.
June 1st, 1946

Major Motherwell,
Supervisor of Fisheries,
402 West Pender St.,
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Sir:

In view of the present demand for food for needy countries of Europe and elsewhere, I am taking the liberty of writing you in regard to the possibility of the taking of quite a large amount of fish products out of the interior lakes, especially the Shuswap Lake, in particular ling and carp, which I am given to understand some countries in Europe and Asia consider a delicacy, and I am also informed that there are thousands of tons of these fish in the lake above mentioned, and while not considered a game fish are detrimental to the life and habits of game fish in fresh waters, and that efforts have been made to clean them out, without much success.

We have in this district a man with considerable experience in the fishery business and he is willing to consider the erection of a processing plant for this purpose if necessary arrangements can be made, under proper supervision, which would not only help the present food situation, create a local payroll, and help the game fish breeding in interior waters.

I would appreciate it very much if you could advise us as to what steps should be taken through your Department in order that this matter might be investigated.

I am also informed that the party in question, C. Nakamura, has considerable equipment available for this purpose.

Thanking you in anticipation, I am,

Yours truly,

C. Barker,
President, Salmon Arm & Dist. Chamber of Commerce.

COPY

June 11, 1946.

C. C. Barker, Esq.,
President,
Salmon Arm & District Chamber of Commerce,
P. O. Drawer 171,
Salmon Arm, B. C.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of June 1st, addressed to Major Motherwell, Chief Supervisor of Fisheries, Vancouver, requesting information as to the possibilities of taking ling and carp commercially from Shuswap Lake, has been forwarded to me for reply. This is to advise that under Section 23 of the Special Fishery Regulations for British Columbia, fishing with nets in certain non-tidal waters of the Province is permissible under licence from the Commissioner of Fisheries.

It is noted that you are inquiring on behalf of one, C. Nakamura. Mr. Nakamura was formerly connected with the Fisheries of British Columbia on the coast, assuming that this is one and the same person. For your information I have to advise that the Order adopted under the War Measures Act early in 1942, restraining the issue of fishing licences to persons of Japanese racial origin, is still in effect under the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act of 1945. This Order applies to licences to fish in the non-tidal waters of the Province, as well as the tidal waters and so long as the Order is in effect, no licence may issue.

Yours very truly,

Geo. J. Alexander,
Assistant Commissioner.

GTA:GC

COPY

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES,

Office of the Chief Supervisor,

Vancouver, B. C.

File 1105-20

June 7, 1946.

Dear Mr. Alexander:

Under date of the 20th ultimo, the Department advised that the Order adopted under the War Measures Act, early in 1942, restraining the issue of fishing licences to persons of Japanese racial origin, is still in effect as a result of continuance under the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act of 1945.

Yours very truly,

J. A. Motherwell,

Chief Supervisor of Fisheries.

COPY

June 11, 1946.

Major J. A. Motherwell,
Chief Supervisor of Fisheries,
Vancouver, B. C.

Attn: Mr. Warne.

Dear Sir:

Thanks very much for your letter of June 7th, advising in respect to the order adopted under the War Measures Act restraining the issue of fishing licences to persons of Japanese racial origin.

Your courtesy in passing along this information is appreciated.

Yours very truly,

Geo. J. Alexander,
Assistant Commissioner.

GJA:GC

COPY

SALMON ARM AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Salmon Arm, B. C.,
June 13, 1946.

Mr. Geo. J. Alexander,
Assistant Commissioner,
Provincial Fisheries Department,
Victoria, B. C.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of June 11th, for which I thank you, I had anticipated that there might be the possibility that Nakamura might not be eligible for a licence for this purpose, and appreciate your confirmation of this.

I would appreciate your advice as to the feasibility of a local company of three or four responsible business men in Salmon Arm, organizing and securing the licence in question for the Shuswap ahd North Okanagan Lakes, and they in turn lease processing equipment from Nakamura and hiring him as manager, on account of his previous experience.

I feel that due to the demand for food, the by-products from the processing, etc., and the clearing of these lakes of this type of fish would promote the breeding of game fish, and finally the creation of a seasonal payroll in the interior, that an industry of this type might be warranted. Could your department give us any advice as to the proper season of the year for this type of fishing?

Thanking you in advance, I am,

Yours sincerely,

C. S. Barker,

President, Salmon Arm & District Chamber of Commerce.

COPY

June 17, 1946.

C. S. Barker, Esq.,
President,
Salmon Arm & District Chamber of Commerce,
Salmon Arm, B. C.

Dear Sir:

This will serve to acknowledge your letter of June 13th, wherein you request advice as to the feasibility of a local company of three or four responsible business men in Salmon Arm organizing and securing a licence to fish carp and ling in Shuswap and North Okanagan Lakes and processing same under the management and using the equipment of Mr. Nakamura.

I note the suggestion that the demand for food and by-products at the present time would apparently warrant the establishment of a small fishing operation in the area and would, in addition, clear the lakes in question of the undesirable type of fish in order to permit the breeding of game fish and, in addition, create a seasonal payroll in the interior. I cannot, however, recommend action which would be in effect, a circumvention of the present law of the country, which would be the effect of carrying out the suggestion contained in your letter.

I have not placed this matter before the Commissioner of Fisheries for his consideration for the above reasons but before making any definite commitments in the matter, the proposition would require the consideration of the Government, as Government policy is involved.

Yours very truly,

COPY

GJA:GC

Geo. J. Alexander,
Assistant Commissioner.

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

OTTAWA

June 28, 1946.

File 716-14-14

Dear Mr. Alexander,

Attached hereto, please find copy of communication of the 22nd instant from Mr. Ernest Doe, Secretary of the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce, Salmon Arm, B. C., together with copy of Department's reply of even date, concerning enquiry regarding proposal for establishment of a commercial fishery for carp and similar fish in the Shuswap Lake area and for processing of the catch by canning.

Yours very truly,

A. J. Whitmore,

Director, Western Fisheries.

G. J. Alexander, Esq.,
Asst. Commissioner of Fisheries,
Victoria, B. C.

COPY

SALMON ARM AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Salmon Arm, B. C.,
June 22, 1946.

Department of Fisheries,
OTTAWA, Ont.

Dear Sir:

At the last meeting of this Chamber of Commerce a proposal to establish a cannery or plant for commercial fishing of carp and similar fish in the Salmon Arm of the Shuswap Lake came up for discussion.

I was instructed to write ascertaining what procedure and instructions were necessary in the establishment and operation of such a venture.

We would appreciate it greatly if you could advise of the necessary steps to be taken in the establishment of such a venture.

Yours faithfully,

Ernest Doe,

Secretary.

COPY

716-14-14
AJW/JR

June 28, 1946.

Dear Sir,

I desire to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant in which you seek information as to procedure, requirements, etc., in the proposal for establishment and operation of a cannery in the vicinity of Salmon Arm for the processing of carp and similar fish which would be taken, in a possible commercial fishery operation in the Shuswap Lake area.

Please be advised that the licensing of fish canning operations in British Columbia is a matter coming within the purview of the Provincial Government and particularly the Provincial Department of Fisheries at Victoria. The licensing of the Commercial fishing in non-tidal waters is also a matter for attention by the Provincial Commissioner of Fisheries by virtue of Section 23 of the Special Fishery Regulations for British Columbia, copy of which is attached.

Copy of your letter, together with a copy of this reply is being sent to Mr. Geo. J. Alexander, Assistant Commissioner of Fisheries, at Victoria, B. C.

Yours very truly,

A. J. Whitmore,
Director, Western Fisheries.

COPY

Ernest Doe,
Secretary,
Salmon Arm & District Chamber of Commerce,
Salmon Arm, B. C.

July 3, 1946.

A. J. Whitmore, Esq.,
Director, Western Fisheries,
Department of Fisheries,
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Mr. Whitmore:

This will serve to acknowledge your letter of June 28th, attaching a copy of communication from Mr. Ernest Doe, Secretary of the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce, together with a copy of the Department's reply concerning the matter of a proposal to establish a commercial fishery for coarse fish in Shuswap Lake. In this connection I have to advise that this Department has already had some correspondence with the President of the Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce regarding this matter.

For your information I may say that the proposal, as originally made to this Department, was to establish a processing plant and commercial fishery at Salmon Arm by one of the displaced Japanese. We have advised the Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce that the order which prohibits Japanese from fishing in British Columbia is still in effect insofar as our knowledge is concerned and on that account licence to Japanese will not issue.

Yours very truly,

Geo. J. Alexander,
Assistant Commissioner.

GJA:GC

COPY

OFFICE OF GAME COMMISSION
540 Howe St.,
Vancouver

August 8th, 1946.

Assistant Commissioner,
Provincial Department of Fisheries,
Victoria, B. C.

Game Fish Culture,
Destruction of Coarse Fish.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of a letter dated 24th ultimo from Inspector R. M. Robertson, concerning the possibility of Japanese being engaged for the purpose of destroying coarse fish in Shuswap Lake. Copy of this letter is enclosed and is self-explanatory, and we would certainly appreciate receiving your views in the proposal as we naturally do not want to take any action herein that would in any way embarrass your Department.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) F. R. Butler,

F. R. Butler,
Commissioner.

FRB:IL
Encl. 1.

COPY

BRITISH COLUMBIA GAME DEPARTMENT

515 Columbia St.,
Kamloops, B. C.
July 25, 1946.

Commissioner F. R. Butler,
Game Department,
650 Burrard St.,
Vancouver, B. C.

Game Fish Culture - Coarse Fish.

Dear Sir:

While in Salmon Arm yesterday I was approached by several of the residents of the Salmon Arm District in the matter of coarse fish destruction in Shuswap Lake.

A Japanese by the name of C. Nakamura has offered to take the coarse fish from Shuswap with the apparatus he has in his possession at the present and which was used for fishing purposes at the coast prior to the war.

I understand the residents of Salmon Arm took the matter up with the Assistant Commissioner of Fisheries, Mr. Alexander, and the reply from Mr. Alexander is that since Mr. Nakamura is a Japanese, he could not be permitted under the wartime regulations, to operate in connection with a project of this kind. An offer was made by the residents of Salmon Arm to form a company and employ the above Japanese and his equipment, appointing him as Manager to handle the taking of coarse fish which he fully understands, but Mr. Alexander was of the opinion, according to the residents of Salmon Arm, that this was merely a means of circumventing the regulations.

While the matter of taking coarse fish, irrespective of who is employed, is of paramount importance, besides the possibility of supplying a payroll by employment of Indians and the erection of buildings with the permission of the Department of Indian Affairs on Indian Reserve or elsewhere, to handle the processing and the supplying of food by the European market or elsewhere, the objection here seemed to be that the Japanese was considered the obstacle in a case of this kind.

As this Japanese has the necessary experience in work of this kind, and no one else to my knowledge has this experience in the Interior, I cannot see any objection to the employment of this Japanese for the above purpose if it will benefit, both from a humanitarian point of view in the supplying of food and the improvement of the fishing in this large body of water.

Under proper supervision, this matter would be no different

to the employment of Japanese on our highways and pea-growing areas or logging camps for that matter and the suggestion has some merit well worth considering.

I would be glad if you would take this matter up so as to enable us to avail ourselves of an opportunity while it prevails.

Mr. Chester C. Barker of Salmon Arm is primarily interested in this matter besides other residents who discussed the matter with me while at Salmon Arm.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) R. M. Robertson,
Inspector i/c,
"C" Game Division.

RMR/HS

August 9, 1946.

F. R. Butler, Esq.,
Provincial Game Commission,
540 Howe Street,
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Mr. Butler:

This will serve to acknowledge your letter of August 8th, enclosing copy of a letter from Inspector Robertson concerning the proposal of engaging Japanese for the purpose of fishing in Shuswap Lake. This matter has already come to the attention of this Department through the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce.

As you know, the security order prohibiting Japanese from fishing in any of the waters of Canada is still in effect and the proposal made to this Department by the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce was to all intents and purposes a means of circumventing the above-mentioned security order, although Japanese would not actually be engaged in doing the fishing. In my correspondence with the Salmon Arm and District Chamber of Commerce, I pointed out that this Department could not be a party to a proposal such as the one made, for obvious reasons. However, as this is something which involves Government policy and something which the Government will have to take a stand on sooner or later, I am taking the matter up with the Commissioner of Fisheries early next week. It may be that the matter will have to be discussed with the Cabinet and if that is so, it may take a few days before a decision is reached.

In the meantime, I would point out for your guidance that the establishment of any fisheries operation, whether for fishing or for shore operations, is required to be licensed by this Department and until such time as Government policy is enunciated, I cannot see my way clear to issue any licences for the operation of a fishing establishment in which Japanese are involved.

I shall be glad to communicate with you again in this matter as soon as I have had an opportunity to discuss same with the Minister.

Yours very truly,

GJA:GC

Assistant Commissioner

COPY