Utah's Fish Interests

Valuable Report on the Industry Submitted by Commissioner Blosser to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Honorable Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, now in session:

Gentlemen:—As contemplated and in compliance with section 3 of the fish and game laws of Utah, I herewith hand you my biennial report.

We are promised several hundred thousand impregnated lake trout eggs from Michigan in the near future. These will be stubbedly hatched and put in the streams in U. on lakes.

In Denver last we planted in solid lots 100,000 fish of the bulhead variety. In a few years there, as elsewhere, will emerge very numerous and quite choicely to the fish supply of Utah.

We also promised a liberal consignment of Repetitive fish from California, and crappie and other indigenous fish from the East (?).

Personally I am beginning to believe that the Utah Lake shad plant will prove a fruitless experiment. This I regret very greatly as at one time we were promised five million from this very large plant of excellent fish (?) on the white fish from the great lakes, which is not only a good substitute for a superior fish in the shad, I am well satisfied will thrive in these lakes. I am encouraged to believe that we will get a consignment of white fish by the coming season.

If the Legislative Assembly will make a liberal appropriation to the fish interests of Utah, it need not be many years before our public and private waters can be made to teem with the best sorts of fresh water fishes, including the terrapin, and even the edible frogs, and I firmly believe that the river can be successfully tilled to pounds contributed to streams I have examined, which are bed with springs.

Last April I was told that sets had been caught at the north end of Utah Lake. I immediately took steps to verify the report, but did not succeed. If there are any sets in the lake or river they must be from the plant made in the Jordan in 1892.

I believe to state that there is no state or territory in the Union more favored than Utah for the successful propagation of fresh water fishes. We have the lakes, rivers and small streams, countless springs and artesian wells, whose temperatures, as shown show the varied temperatures expressed by the terms cold, cool, warm and hot.

It is hoped by some, who I think are unduly prejudiced against the carp, that they will become so numerous as to seriously menace the development and even existence of the better fishes. It is a fact that already the fish streams only feed with carp, but they are not so aggressive (?). They eat neither spawn nor fry, but live in city on vegetable matter and microscopic life found in the mud and sides of the water they inhabit. The presence of so many of them in nearly all the streams should be an encouragement for fishermen to catch them in large numbers for the seed markets, and they should now be selling for from 4 to 5 cents per pound. If propagated in pure running water they are a good edible fish, but if raised in filthy ponds, before cooking they should be carefully cleaned, then passed through several changes of sour, salt water. I have on file hundreds of testimonials in favor of the edible qualities of the carp, and many leading fish journals pronounce it an excellent fish.

In a letter from Editor Logan of "American Fish Culturist" and another from Hon. J. J. Disselhoff, Fort-In-Day, Ohio, I learn that the market calling is growing in rapid favor in the Eastern and Middle states, and that the Ohio state fish commission has planted all over the state the fish from Chautauqua lake, caught in fly. This is a rapid grower and large in size, that the common bullhead, or the spotted catfish, the latter of which thrive well in warm streams.

The law giving liberty to fishermen to take minnows, shiners and minnows from Lake Utah during seven months of the year, has proved to be a wholesome provision, for these comparatively worthless fish are greedy spawn and fry eaters, and I understand that great numbers have been caught and cleaned off in this city and elsewhere during the past season.

From reputation Sir Isaac the county fish and game commissioners I am led to believe that instructions of the fish and game laws are being administered compared with former years, and it is gratifying to know that Utah has several county commissioners who, by their vigilance and zeal, have secured the arrest and conviction of a number of offenders. The fines imposed upon these have no doubt deterred others from violating the wholesome laws. I would be glad to make special mention of the most vigilant of these commissioners, but for serious reasons I must refrain. I would suggest that fifteen arrests are made for violating the fish and game laws are made for violating the fish and game laws, and that good results if such cases were published in the newspapers as a deterrent or warning to others.

Our fish and game laws are evidently very far from being perfect. One county commissioner in his report says, "Many of the officials have evinced that a law is not a 'valuable citizen' and therefore it is not unlawful to catch trout in Pangolin lake and export them out of the Territory." Others assert that our streams, canals and ditches are not "natural streams," and so contemplate the poisons may do as they please, in season and out of season, with the countless fish, small and large, that enter those streams. The last Assembly expunged the words "public waters" and substituted "streams and rivers." Under the former wording so such causes as the above were urged by the trolers.

Another commissioner writes: "There are there half some cases of smaller streams, and the fish game seems that drain the entire stream, and when the fish come down they are forced out on the land and are caught or left to rot. A great many fish are killed in going over the weirs and when they are caught in the ditches of those the repair of the lake repairing canals being placed at the head gates, there is no remedy to correct these destructive evils.

Another writes: "With the present law it is very hard to protect trout and the imported fishes, as there are too many drawn in Utah lake every day, and it is hard to watch them all, but I am doing my best to see that the law is observed. One of the catfish you put in the lake last October was caught the other day at a point about five miles up from where they were planted."

I sincerely wish I could awaken a greater interest in the great industry, which is receiving such increased and widespread attention by almost every state and territory in the Union and by the general government. Millions of dollars are now annually appropriated to promote it and it means millions to the people of commerce, for the best fish can be multiplied and marketed at a fraction of what it costs to raise domestic animals for food. As it now is, fish nearly ready, will not preserved, fresh and higher to see than the fresh, salt and preserved meats of the domestic animals.

"The water is the silent designer of the country, the element upon which the wealth of the first of mankind." Said all that fish are to be found in salt waters. They are independent of man's care or care. As one of water of sufficient depth can be made to fill a million ton three times than on an area of land upon which agriculture are raised. Fish need no feeding, housing in or out, hoeing, cultivating, watching or doctoring, and they always in fine form in their native environment. No pain or destruction of human life by fire, as the engines save salmon fish, all for their protection, which quadrupeds are the cause of overwhelming and costly going in law.

Compare the cost of raising and marketing a ton of fish with that of a ton of beef or pork or mutton. Compare the marvelous multiplication and development of the one with the slowly compute the great pleasure the one carries over the other, and tell me, if you please, the wisdom or folly of fish not being put on man's table where practicable and while the legislature and sessions committees hesitate to work for the multiplication and distribution of fish they seem to always find a ready hand and money at the whole menagerie with parental solicitude, ever ready to offer premiums for the best pigs and target sunflowers.

Fish can be artificially multiplied almost indefinitely at a very nominal cost. It is a great pity that fish are not a fishery, shadow fishery. Other states and territories have sent from one to eight or ten gallons as private consignees. Wyoming, with about one quarter the wealth and population we have, has for years made liberal appropriations for fish hatchery, over which it is justly proud.

The distribution of fry and eggs by the general government and state hatcheries in the years 1892 and 1893 has been comparatively limited, however, no doubt, of the same and lands that have been employed to make the great showing at the Columbian Exposition, but now that that is over, I am satisfied that the general government and some of the state hatcheries will, through proper representation and persistent effort, be induced to send us liberal consignments of fry and eggs which in a short time will hatch out in our waters beyond calculation.

Fry and eggs are easily to be had for the mere asking. Correspondence with many agencies, East and West, has to be opened, and persistent, respectful importuning has to be kept up in order to secure consignments for our public waters and private ponds. If we by such efforts, as my letter book will show, that Utah has been favored with such liberal gifts in fry and eggs of the very best fishes known to the trade.

For the information of the honorable Assembly I will here recapitulate what has been done by way of stocking our waters, public and private, with eastern fishes:

1885—Put in Weber river, 500 carp; 1 million fry, 2,000 carp.

1887—Put in Jordan river, 1,000,000 shad fry and 51 cars, 19 barbs; put in Deseret canal, 500 carp; in aquarium, 8,000 carp.

1889—Put in Utah lake, 2,000,000 shad fry; into Weber river, 400 carp; into Provo river, 400 carp; into Mill Creek and Jordan, 1,000 carp; deposit lake 1,000 carp; in aquarium, 9,000 carp.

1890—To aquarium, 9,000 carp; Jordan county, 1,000 carp.

1891—A car load of black bass, rainbow perch, crappies and sun fish, (many of them spawners) from the Illinois river. About a fourth of them were put into the Weber river at Ogden, and the remainder into Utah Lake. Dr. Bethel said at the time, "I regard the load as a valuable one, in that the fish are the best our waters produce, of fine size, and in good condition. They should make a valuable addition to the waters of Utah, or any other."

It is our design to send you another earlier this season which I will do if our supply holds out. I will add that we occasionally take some sturgeon, but there is nothing certain about them. It may be possible that we can procure a few to go forward with your second carload. I assure you that any efforts we may make to get them will be a pleasure."

Also during 1891 1,800 carp were furnished to applicants, and 2,000 were put into Provo river, county county.

In 1892 there were put into Weber river 800,000 shad fry, and four lake 1,000,000.

(Also) three large lots of native plants, viz: Algae, nitra and lime moss filled with microscopic life upon which shad feed, and which we planted near the months of Dear, Weber and Jordan rivers.) Applicants were furnished 6,000 carp.

In 1893 4,600 carp were furnished to applicants.

In 1893 1,000 catfish were planted in Utah lake.

These millions of fishes have cost the Territory not a dollar together, and when the cost is compared with the aggregate value of the several ponds, even now, say nothing of a few years hence, the difference is comparatively inestimable.

The object of making Utah Lake the pattern, nursery and hatchery of the central region geographically, and as per population, and nearer to average depth is now from 12 to 15 feet. The geographical position facilitates the distribution of fry to all other territorial points, and the lake's uniform shallow depth makes it quite easy to the fishermen as a commercial sort.

The following was asked for catch of Utah Lake during the past year (may investigate your numerals only):

Number of men engaged in fishing during last year, 38.

Number of days employed in fishing, 3,811.

Number of boats employed, 41.
Number of seines employed, 25.
Value of boats and seines, 24,100.
Pounds of trout taken, 25,150.
Other fishes, 1,200,000.
Total wholesale value of the year's catch, $20,870.
Total retail value of the year's catch, $72,005.
If add 2,000 pounds of the trout were taken with hook and line.

And to the above showing, which covers Utah lake alone and for one year, the fish caught in all the other lakes and streams of Utah, I believe the total value would reach a quarter million dollars, and in the years commence to the fishing interests of U. as are rapidly approaching, bring into the annuities of persons engaged and to commercial industry.

From a well equipped hatchery millions of shades of fry could be annually distributed. The demand from thousands of dollars to the people of the Territory. It is and this demand is annually increased through hot hatcheries and streams to the tune of $150,000, that results are sent to be hatched."

Very respectfully submitted,

A. MILES BLOSSER,

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, JAN. 15th, 1894.

ANOTHER TESTIMONY.

Statement of William Smith, Concerning Joseph, the Prophet.

The Plates Controversy for Book of Mormon—Joseph's Character as a Boy—The Rise of the Church.

Some time ago the News contained a notice of the death of William Smith, the last surviving brother of the martyred Prophet, and also biographical notes on the career of this member of the celebrated family. The mother of the News will pursue with interest the following account of an interview with the same some years before his death. It is written for *Zion's Ensign*, a paper published at Independence, Mo.

INDEPENDENCE, Mo.—I am under promise to Bro. E. C. Briggs and others, to send to your paper a transcript of an interview between Uncle Wm. H. Smith and E. C. Briggs. I herewith submit the following (about three sheets and also from memory):

Bro. Briggs and I visited him next day after he returned from St. Paul, being about ten weeks before his death. We found him able to be about the house and quite willing to talk. After passing the time of day, etc., Bro. Briggs and he spoke of former meetings and finally drifted on to the subject of Bro. Smith's early childhood and his knowledge of the rise of the Church, Book of Mormon, etc.

Bro. Briggs then handed me a pencil and asked Bro. Smith if he ever saw the plates, his mother had had, from which the work of Mormon was translated.

He replied, "I did not see them myself, but I handled them and felted them while wrapped in a new black and yellow linen to have weighed about sixty pounds. I could tell they were plates of some kind and that they were fastened together by rings running through the back. Their size was as described in mother's history."

Bro. Briggs then asked, "Did any others of the family see them?"

"Yes," said he, "father and my brother Samuel saw them as I did while in the frock. So did Hyrum and others of the family."

Was the frock, and the Joseph took with him especially to wrap the plates in?"

"No, it was his every day frock such as young men used to wear then."

"Did you want to remove the cloth and see the bare plates?" said Bro. B.

"No," he replied, "for father had just asked if he might not be permitted to do so, and Joseph, putting his hand on them said, 'No, I am ordered not to show them to any one. If I do, I will transgress and lose them again.' Besides we did not care to have our hands the commandment and refer as he did before."

"Did you ever hear Joseph's testimony sometimes?" said Bro. Briggs.

"Yes," was the reply. "We all had the most implicit confidence in what he said. He was a truthful boy. Father and mother believed him, who should not the children? I suppose if he had told crooked stories about other things we might have doubted his word about the plates, but Joseph was a truthful boy. The father and mother believed his report, and without persecution for that (after shown that he was troubled. No sir, we never doubted his word for one minute."

"Well," said Bro. B. "He said that Joseph and the rest of the family were lazy and indolent."

"We never heard of such a thing until after Joseph told his story, and not then, by our friends. Whenever the neighbors wanted a good day's work done they knew where they could get a good hand and they were not particular to take any of the other boys before Joseph either. We cleared sixty acres of the heaviest timber I ever saw. We had a good night. We also had on it from twelve to fifteen hundred sugar trees, and to gather the sap and make sugar and molasses from that number of trees was no lazy job. We worked hard to clear the place and the neighbors were a little jealous. If you will hunt up how much work it would take to clear sixty acres of heavy timber land, heavier than any forty, there you would see immediately our down, you can tell whether we were lazy or not, and Joseph did his share of the work with the rest of the boys.

"We never knew we were bad folks until Joseph told his vision. We were considered respectable all then, but at once people began to envision fault-hunts and stories in a wonderful way.

"Were your folks religiously inclined before Joseph saw the angel?" asked brother Briggs.

"Yes, we always had family prayers since I can remember. I will remember father used to carry his spectacles in his vest pocket, feeling in his lower right hand pocket to show to now and where I and when as been see him feel of the book, we knew that was a signal to get ready for prayer, and if we did not make it much sport say, 'William,' or whoever was the unlucky one, 'get ready for prayer.' After the prayer we had a song we would sing, I remember part of it yet.

Mother dear we joined our voices,
We did our choices to.

"Hyrum, Samuel, Katharine and mother were members of the Presbyterian church. My father which not join, its did not like it because a Rev. Stockton had preached my brother's funeral sermon and intimated very strongly that he had gone to hell, for Alvin was not a church member, but he was a good boy and my father did not like it.

"Was caused Joseph to ask for guidance as to what church he might join?" asked Bro. B.

"Why, there was a joint revival in the neighborhood between the Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians and they had succeeded in stirring up some feeling, and after the meeting, continue series which church should have the converts. Rev. Stockton was the preacher of the meeting and claimed that it was their meeting and under their care and they had a church there and they ought to join the Presbyterian church or rather the rest like his confession very well, our folks believed and the next evening a Rev. Mr. Lane of the Methodists preached a sermon on 'what church shall I join?' And the burden of his discourse was to ask God, using as a text, 'If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally.' And of course your Joseph went home and was holding over the text he was impressed to do so, when the preacher had not, and going out in the woods with eight lines, he made his faith believed that God would hear what He said, he knowed were and prayed, and the time having come for the reorganization of His church, God was pleased to place him (he to found just some of those children but is gone so he should be chosen to establish the true Church."

We also talked with Bro. Smith concerning his connection with the Church during the days of his brother, and also Bro. Briggs had gone to Minneapolis to secure a copy of the affidavit of Joseph Smith on that subject which I will send in my next.

J. W. PEGGS.

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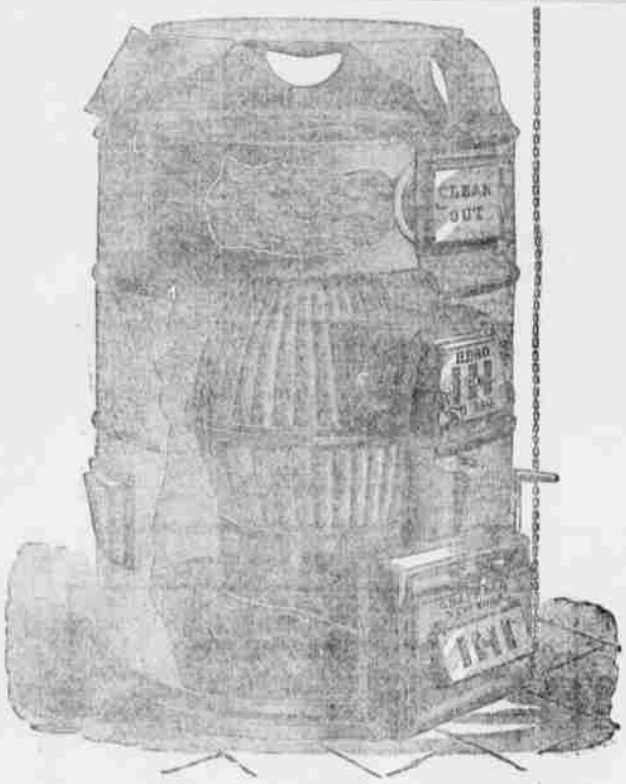

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