

CONSERVATION CORNER
SEIZED ARTICLE SALE

Fishing tackle, ranging all the way from a 25-cent bamboo pole to a \$40 spinning outfit, seized for violations of fishing regulations, will go on sale to the highest bidders at six points across the Province next month. It is estimated that, in all, more than 400 rods and about 150 miscellaneous articles will be offered. The miscellaneous equipment includes dip nets, minnow and smelt seines, minnow pails, landing nets, axes, flashlights etc.

Sales are scheduled for April 12, 13 and 14 at Port Arthur and April 18, 19 and 20 at North Bay, Ottawa, Peterborough, Hespeler and Aylmer. This will be the second sale under the decentralized plan of selling seized articles in districts instead of at head office of the Department of Lands and Forests in Toronto. Sales held at Sudbury, Kemptville and Lindsay last year have been moved this year to North Bay, Ottawa and Peterborough this year for convenience and accommodation reasons.

- - -

SMELTS SOON???

The sun is shining on both sides of the fence. Spring is near and thousands of Ontario residents are preparing for the smelt run. This is an annual event which can't be marked exactly on a calendar but which occurs in countless streams shortly after the ice goes out.

The smelt generally is thought of as a marine fish--living in the estuaries and along the shores of the ocean. But there's no doubt about the existence of fresh water smelt, millions of them. In some lakes they may be caught through holes in the ice. Usually, however, Ontario fishermen use the dipnet, and some even dip with buckets.

It is nearly 20 years ago that the smelt first appeared in abundance in Ontario. In 1936, Dr. W. J. K. Harkness, Chief of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, wrote in a report to the Department:

"A new fish has appeared in recent years in Lake Huron and other Great Lakes-- Smelts were introduced into Michigan to serve as food for landlocked salmon which it was expected would thrive in

(Cont. on next col.)

SMELTS SOON???(Cont.)

lakes once smelts had been established." The sad truth was that the landlocked salmon didn't thrive---but the smelts did.

"Only time will tell", Dr. Harkness commented in 1936, "whether the appearance of smelt in such numbers in the Great Lakes is beneficial or otherwise. In any case, it is too late to do anything about it now. The time to consider such problems is before introducing a foreign species....."

Apparently, as long ago as 1906, the Michigan State Fish Commission introduced the landlocked Atlantic salmon into certain northern Michigan lakes and the Great Lakes. The salmon came from Maine, where smelt was their chief food. When smelt were introduced, they stayed. The salmon didn't.

The smelt were planted in Crystal Lake, from which they made their way into Lake Michigan. It was in 1918 that Newt Ely, of Beulah, Mich., took two water pails from his woodshed to fill in a creek which swept behind his house. A surprise awaited him.

Newspaper reports of the day said: "At the creek he dipped a pail into the foot-depth of crystal clear water with the indifferent motion of established habit. The pail felt strangely heavy as it came up. Newt paused to look at it. He stared in open-mouthed astonishment.

"In the bucket was a wiggling, flipping mass. Instead of a pail of water, he had a pail of fish---little sardine-like fish about eight inches long. He turned to the creek. The six-foot width of water was filled from bank to bank with a teeming, struggling mass of fish, all headed upstream. Some were crowded above the water."

That started the smelt run business, a business which brought thousand of dollars to resort areas. Michigan particularly went for the smelt in a big way, with carnivals, "Queens" and all the trimmings.

The little fish recognized no boundary line and appeared along the north shore of Lake Huron in Ontario, then moved to the south, eventually through the lower lakes into the St. Lawrence River. There's hardly a stream in hundreds of miles now which isn't visited by smelt fishermen once the ice is out.

The smelt isn't much of a fish
 (Cont. on page 7)