

It was disclosed at this hearing that the United States produced 83,331,000 pounds of crabs, valued at \$2,568,000. Of this amount, 68,760,000 pounds, valued at \$1,722,000, were caught in Maryland and Virginia waters. Thus it may be seen that the bulk of the American production comes from the Chesapeake.

During 1930, the United States imported about 10,000,000 pounds of crab meat, valued at \$4,600,000. Practically all of this was a canned, hermetically sealed article from Japan, and a duty of 15% ad valorem was placed thereon, and on all crab meat entering the United States. On the basis of the foregoing, the people of the United States consumed about 20,000,000 pounds of crab meat in 1930, of which about one-half was domestic.

The Conservation Department, through its Seafood Auditor, has made a very careful survey of the crab industry of Maryland, in an effort to determine where the supply of crabs and crab meat is at present being marketed. It is astonishing to find that crab shippers are limited in their markets to a few nearby states and cities. With the increase of crabs in our waters during the past five years, these markets have naturally become somewhat congested, and prices obtained have been too low for the watermen and packers engaged in the business to make more than a bare living.

At a meeting held by the Conservation Commissioner at Crisfield during the early autumn of 1932, before the seafood committee of the local Chamber of Commerce, these facts were revealed, and it was proposed to organize units throughout tidewater Maryland, to be followed by a State-wide organization, for the purpose not only of working out an efficient system of marketing crabs and other seafood, but to prevent waste in these industries.

It has been estimated that one-third of the crab production of Maryland during the past two years has been improperly marketed, and if standardized could be obtained and a more efficient system be worked out, either by canning or quick freezing, it will enormously aid the people engaged in the industry, and at the same time widen the distribution of this important seafood of Chesapeake Bay and combat the encroachments of the Oriental product.

When the production of crabs in the Chesapeake in 1925 was 29,000,000 pounds, the main shipping points or markets were Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia and New York. The Seafood Auditor's survey shows that with an increased production in 1931 to 68,000,000 pounds, the crab packers shipped to substantially the same markets. To show how poorly distributed the supply is, it was found that Baltimore, with 800,000 inhabitants, used 1,500,000 pounds of crabs coming from Maryland waters and 600,000 pounds from Virginia, while the City of New York, with approximately 7,000,000 inhabitants, got only 400,000 pounds from Maryland. Little or no crab meat gets west of Pittsburgh. The great potential market of the Middle West could consume all the surplus crab meat that Maryland might produce, and with proper distribution would give a fair profit to the crab packer as well as the watermen engaged in taking this important seafood.

Commercial Value of the Tidal Waters

The survey previously referred to, which was completed by the Seafood Auditor in co-operation with the United States Bureau of Fisheries, brought out some very interesting facts which are worthy of mention.

In the last few years, the increased value of seafood in certain waters of the State has been marked, especially is this true of Queen Anne's