

# Herring Roe Industry Grows

Governor William A. Egan has been advised by Fish and Game Commissioner Walter Kirkness that the infant herring roe industry of southeastern Alaska produced 466,018 pounds of roe in the 1965 season now ended.

Herring spawn on kelp and the roe is harvested by picking the oaves on which it is deposited. "Roe on kelp" has become a highly popular food item in Japan and demand for it is very strong, according to the U. S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries.

A total of 765 persons, working mostly from skiffs, participated in the 1965 herring roe harvest which took place in the Craig, Hydaburg, and Sitka areas. Some 100 additional persons were employed during the brief season packing the produce in barrels.

In 1959—the first year of operation—two processors bought approximately 107,000 pounds of roe on kelp. After many residents of Craig and Klawock voiced their concern that king salmon, which feed on herring, would be depleted if the herring roe fishing were continued, the 1960 Legislature prohibited the taking of roe for commercial purposes.

The Legislature in 1961 modified his action to allow the taking of herring roe by permit issued by the Commissioner of Fish and Game. The Alaska Board of Fish and Game restricted the harvest further by imposing a quota and prohibiting the picking of kelp. These restrictions prevented a commercial harvest in 1961.

The Board of Fish and Game in the fall of 1961 rescinded the quota and prohibition of kelp cutting, but the permit system established by the Legislature remained in effect. With the removal of the two Board regulations, the herring roe fishing resumed in April of 1962 with two processors buying roe on kelp. Since that time, the fishery has grown rapidly. Seven processors bought 169,399 pounds in 1964.

Because of the tremendous increase in interest shown in commercial harvesting of herring roe in 1964, a quota system was reimposed. A quota was also in effect in the 1965 season.

The lineal miles of roe-laden kelp

in the Craig and Hydaburg areas this year was estimated at 20 miles at the time of harvest. The relatively small amount of herring roe being utilized by the fishery is reflected in the fact that the harvest in this area took place entirely in a one-mile area. The same proportion holds true for the Sitka area.