

# KIWANIANS HEAR OF FISHING RODS

Leon Thomas Speaker at  
the Regular Luncheon—  
Unique Industry.

A huge rack of beautiful fishing rods, all hand made and from the factory of the world famous Thomas Fishing Rods, graced the luncheon meeting of the Kiwanis Club, and members were taken through the processes of manufacturing by Leon J. Thomas. Mr. Thomas sketched the development of the present fishing pole and told of some of the large fish that have been caught on Thomas rods.



LEON THOMAS

of the fishing rod industry was unfolded by Mr. Thomas in a most interesting discourse.

Previous to 1870, split bamboo poles were made in four, or quarter sections. It was about 1870 that Hiram L. Leonard invented the six strip split bamboo fishing rod in Bangor. This industry was started on the top floor of the building now occupied by Warren's drug store.

In this same year, 1870, Mr. Leonard moved to Central Valley, New York, where he began to manufacture fishing rods. Nearly all high grade rods of today are the outgrowths of the Leonard rod. Fred E. Thomas went to work for Mr. Leonard in 1882 and continued to work for him for six years.

In 1883 Mr. Thomas, E. W. Edwards and Loman Hawes formed a co-partnership to manufacture Thomas rods. They sold their entire output to A. G. Spaulding Bros., of New York. In 1893 this co-partnership manufactured rods for Spaulding which were exhibited at the World's Fair in Chicago. These rods were awarded the gold medal. In 1894 they sold out their rod business and in 1899 Mr. Thomas moved to Brewer and started the manufacture of rods for himself in the Glover building on Center street.

In 1900 Mr. Leonard died at the age of 75 years, having evolved the basic idea for the best made fishing rods in the world. The hexagonal rod

casts perfectly which could not be said of the four sided pole.

Mr. Thomas moved to 117 Exchange street in Bangor in 1901. It was in this building that real success began to come to him and here the business has grown so that now it ranks as second in the quality fishing rod manufacturers in the world.

Stock rods were loaned to the United States Fisheries to be exhibited in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition by the Thomas Rod Co., and were awarded the silver medal.

Mr. Thomas went carefully into the construction of the rod, method of manufacture, glueing, varnishing and the like. The metal work is hand constructed of German silver.

Thomas rods are being shipped all over the United States and Canada, as well as England and Ireland. Various rods are manufactured for dry fly casting, wet fly casting, bait casting, salt water, surf and boat fishing as well as light novelty rods.

The longest distance single fly rod cast made by a Thomas rod was 124 feet by Julius Crenin in 1931. The longest two hand, or salmon rod cast was 150 feet made in 1930 and the longest bait cast made was 344 feet by Karl Krinear in 1931. Tarpon weighing 200 pounds are hauled in on Thomas deep sea fishing rods and the heaviest salmon ever pulled in on a Thomas rod weighed 54 pounds and was caught and landed by Charles Fair of New Brunswick.