



Ottawa. May 5th., 1904.

TO THE HONOURABLE R. PREFONTAINE,
MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES,
Ottawa.

Sir:-

THE undersigned have the honour to submit our report upon the grievances of the salmon and lobster fishermen in the County of Gloucester and the eastern portion of Restigouche County, New Brunswick, in accordance with the terms of the Order in Council dated 13th April, 1904,

THE inquiry which we carried out at Bathurst, April 15th., Caraquet, April 16th., Lameque, April 18th., and at Charlo, April 20th., were attended by large numbers of fishermen and parties interested in the questions to be investigated and reported upon.

THE work divided itself into three sections:-

1. The salmon fishery;
2. The Dog-fish pest; and
3. The lobster fishery.

WE append to this report a digest of the main points brought out in the evidence given by the witnesses; but for the convenience of the Minister, we state in a concise form, the recommendations we are prepared to make, based on the evidence given us.

(A) - SALMON FISHERY -

AMEND THE SUNDAY
CLOSE TIME REGULATION.

WE beg to recommend that from Dalhousie, eastward along the coasts of Restigouche and Gloucester Counties, up to and including Caraquet Island, the Sunday close time provided by sub-section 14, of Section 14 of the Fisheries Act, should be abolished. The reasons for this recommendation are: (a) That on account of the exposed nature of the coast, it is ~~perilous~~ ^{perilous} to the lives of the fishermen, and practically impossible to get out to the nets and raise them for a considerable number of days during the fishing season. North-east and North-west winds are very prevalent, and the evidence shows that there is a peculiarly strong current inshore, which all combine to make it dangerous to the fishermen for a considerable portion of the season to even approach their nets;

(b) THE nets, when tied up, according to the plan that has been required in past years, affords a better hold for the current and surge, and are more easily destroyed on that account. The storms above stated which are very frequent, - North-east and North-west, - not only destroy the nets; but drive them ashore;

(c) THE nets at present fish only a portion of the season which the law allows, for the reasons stated, viz: storms and currents;

(d) THE nets in question accumulate a great amount of debris and weeds, roots and dirt, which put the nets out of working order. The materials entangled in the nets require to be cleaned out at intervals, and on that account the nets are not fishing continuously;

(e) THE annoyance and practical persecution

suffered

suffered by the fishermen at the hands of the Officers of the Angling Clubs, are quite serious. These Officers usurp the duties of Fishery Officers, and act in such a reckless manner as to cause endless trouble and dissatisfaction. Nets which were in a condition to suit the local Fishery Officers, did not suit the Clubs' Officers, and this was a cause of great friction.

REDUCE SALMON SEASON BY 15 DAYS.

2. WE would recommend shortening the open season for all parties, - net fishermen and anglers. The season should be from March 1st. to August 1st., instead of to August 15th.. It is true there are some runs of salmon after the 1st. August; but as the spawning time approaches, fish deteriorate in condition, and should not be caught either in the nets or by the anglers up the rivers.

RESERVE BREEDING POOLS OF RIVERS

3. WE recommend that, if possible, steps should be taken to reserve some portions of salmon rivers, especially pools where the salmon congregate for spawning purposes. By reserving pools in this way, under the authority of Section 31 of the Fisheries Act, the salmon would be free from all disturbances and danger of destruction, and the supply of salmon would undoubtedly be greatly improved.

ENFORCE SUNDAY CLOSE TIME, BUT MODIFY ITS DETAILS WEST OF DALHOUSIE

4. Recommendation No. 1 does not apply to the shores west of, and including Dalhousie. The fishermen there are prepared to abide by the Sunday close time; but feel that they should not be compelled to lift the nets out of the water and fix them up on the tops of the pickets or stakes, as desired by the Officers of the Angling Clubs. The evidence showed that the fishermen west of Dalhousie are prepared to raise the bottom of the net, and so put it out.

out of fishing order; but to do more than this they regard a great hardship. We recommend that in this matter, the decision of the local Fishery Officer be regarded as satisfactory and final by the Department.

SUGGESTION TO LIMIT
TRIAL OF FISHERY CASES
TO FISHERY OFFICERS
(not ordinary J.P.s)

5. IN view of the very serious complaints against the course often at present adopted, of having cases brought before an ordinary Justice of the Peace, who has no special knowledge of fishery matters, instead of a qualified Fishery Officer, we recommend that steps should be considered with a view to having, as far as possible, all cases tried before a district Fisheries Inspector. This would insure the fishermen that they would receive intelligent consideration and justice, and in Gloucester County especially, the fishermen have felt that the charges brought against them, being tried before an outside magistrate, who had really no practical knowledge, was a gross injustice to them; that they not only did not receive fair treatment; but they practically lost a great portion of the fishing season. The fishermen urged that the Fisheries Act should be amended so as to exclude outside magistrates and Justices of the Peace from trying fishery cases; but we realize the grave difficulty in dealing with this suggestion.

Strict observance of
immature fish protection,
by Anglers, urged

6. WE recommend that sub-section 9 of Section 14 of the Fisheries Act be more strictly enforced, as the evidence showed that anglers on the salmon rivers, especially the Nepissiquit, destroy large numbers of immature salmon and grilse, which is clearly a contravention of the provisions of the Act. If these fish were replaced in the water, and allowed to reach maturity, it would tend greatly to the improvement of the number of salmon.

(B)

- DOG-FISH -

In view of the serious nature of the Dog-fish pest along the Bay Chaleur, we recommend that a bounty be paid by the Government in order to encourage the capture in quantities of these detestable fish by the fishermen when carrying on their cod fishing operations. A bounty would compensate them not only for their loss in time; but in gear, etc., and would also to some extent recompense them for the extra labour in handling these useless fish. As a digest of the evidence shows that they often take ten thousand Dog-fish when catching five thousand Cod-fish, and five or six hundred Dog-fish on a trawl at one time is not by any means unfrequent, the loss to the fishermen may be appreciated.

BOUNTY RECOMMENDED
 viz. 1 1/2 cents for each
 adult fish
 1/2 cent for each
 young Dogfish (female)

1. A payment of a bounty of One Dollar and fifty cents per hundred tails is recommended as a fair rate, as many fishermen in their evidence declared that it would not pay them to take Dog-fish and handle them for less than Three Dollars per hundred, while some were prepared to do it for One Dollar; but they would then be involving a loss of labour and time, so that a compromise of One Dollar and fifty cents per hundred tails would seem reasonable. The fishermen would be required to cut off the tails of the adult or full grown Dog-fish, and bring ashore the young fish, of which quite a number are produced at one time, by the female Dog-fish. A payment of one and a half cents for each young Dog-fish is also recommended. The tails and the young, it is suggested, should be brought to the nearest Fishery Officer, who should count them, and fill out a certificate to be transmitted to the Inspector,

and

and by the Inspector to the Department. On August 15th. and November 15th., the Department might make the payments of bounty, as these dates would suit the Gloucester fishermen, as about the middle of August the crews change boats, and on November 15th. the season's fishing is practically ended. We lay special stress on the extermination of the young Dog-fish, as it is only by the destruction of the young that the Dog-fish trouble in the future can be effectively removed.

LATER THE DEPT.
MIGHT JUSTIFIABLY
ASSIST IN BOUNTY
DOES NOT EFFECT
EXTERMINATION

3. IF the above recommendation, after being tried for one season, does not appear to be sufficiently efficacious, we recommend that in addition to the system of bounty, the Department should either employ the Fishery Protection cruisers, or hire special tugs, provided with strong and capacious seines, for the purpose of aiding in the extermination of the Dog-fish on the fishing grounds. Bait or gurry would require to be thrown into the sea to attract the fish, and cause them to congregate in schools, when they could be surrounded.

(C) - THE LOBSTER FISHERY -

LOBSTER TRAPS TO
BE ALLOWED IN
2 fm. INSHORE AREAS
NAMED.

1. WE recommend that the present regulation prohibiting the setting of lobster traps in two fathoms of water be amended, so that in the inside waters specified below, traps may be set in a specified season, which we name below. The limits within which this concession should be granted are as follows: (a) Inside an imaginary line drawn from Point Brule to Arsene Hebert's Point, ^{via St} near Simon's Harbour; (b) Within a line drawn from Mizonnette to Albert's Brook, east of Caraquet Station, in the waters of Caraquet Harbour; (c) From Beaudin's Point, Miscou Island,

to Campbell's ^{Point} Island, Shippegan Island, in Miscou and ⁰⁷ Little Shippegan Harbour.

CHANGE OF
SEASON ORDER
IN HARBOURS
NAMED

2. WE recommend, in view of the evidence laid before us, that the season within the inshore limits named above, should be from May 1st. to July 31st., instead of the present season, - April 20th. to July 10th.

BROKEN LOBSTER
MEAT TO BE
PERMISSIBLE FOR
THE FISHERMEN

3. THE use of broken lobster meat conveyed to the canneries by the fishermen, has been prohibited since the last Lobster Commission, in 1898. The reasons for this prohibition are: (a) That it would be difficult to prevent small lobsters being extensively used, if broken meat can be legally handled outside the canneries; (b) To insure the best quality of packed lobster meat.

THE evidence at Caraquet went to show that this prohibition is a great hardship upon certain classes of fishermen, who for years have been accustomed to boil and break up their lobsters, and sell the broken meat to the canneries at an enhanced price. They urge very strongly in their evidence that they be allowed to continue the practice, which they had exercised for many years, notwithstanding the fact that there is a regulation against it. Mr. Commissioner Morais favours this concession; but as far as the Commissioner of Fisheries is concerned, he has doubts about the wisdom of a permanent continuance of this concession.

Respectfully submitted,

M. P. Morais
E. Édouard de Prince

- SOME POINTS IN THE EVIDENCE -

SUMMARY OF SOME
POINTS

DIFFICULTIES UNDER WHICH SALMON FISHERMEN
LABOUR EAST OF DALHOUSIE.

HEAVY STORMS
INTERFERE WITH
WORKING OF SALMON
NETS.

THE evidence established the fact that great schools of salmon must get past the nets set along the coast, because the storms, heavy currents, etc., practically put the nets out of fishing order, and the necessity of strictly observing the Sunday close time is therefore less urgent. The evidence showed that there has been really no decrease in the supply of salmon. Mr. Sydney Desbrisay said " I own over twenty stands of nets, and judging from a series of years, I find we catch as many salmon now as ever. Two years ago just after we got our nets in fishing order, a storm came up and destroyed all our nets. A week later a second storm came up and caused a similar damage."

Placide Frenette said " the loss of time caused by storms and the destruction of nets, and the short season we have for fishing will prevent us from being able to make both ends meet, if we are forced to continue raising our nets on Sunday."

ANGLERS DESTROY
GRILSE & SMALL SALMON.

- DESTRUCTION OF SMALL SALMON BY ANGLERS -

A number of witnesses testified that there is a great destruction of immature salmon by the anglers in the rivers. These fish pass through the nets of the fishermen. James Armstrong said that he used a six inch mesh, and a nine pound salmon would go through a seven inch mesh. John Miller said, "nearly all the grilse caught by the anglers are under

three pounds weight. Some years the anglers employed him to pack fish for them so as to snip them." Mr. P.J. Vineau told of two anglers who, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., they caught not less than twenty grilse. " It is such work as this that helps to diminish the quantity of salmon along our coast and in the rivers."

MONEY LOSSES OF
SALMON FISHERMEN
DURING THE STORMS OF 1902.

THE salmon fishermen annually experience considerable loss on account of storms. Mr. Mawhinney said " One time last season it cost me Two Hundred Dollars to refit my nets." John A. McMillan said " Between the 1st. and 5th. July, the damage to our nets alone was between Fifty and One Hundred Dollars. I do not fish to the latter date. A stand of nets is worth at least Four Hundred Dollars. In my opinion the nets would have a better chance if they were not tied up." Charles Stewart said " We are in danger of losing our nets on account of being tied up. I have suffered heavy losses." S. Desbrisay said: " There must be over Three Hundred Thousand Dollars invested in the salmon fishery on the Gloucester County shore. In 1902, June 26th., a storm suddenly came up and destroyed every net along our shore."

- POINTS IN DOG-FISH EVIDENCE -

THE losses to the fishermen on account of the Dog-fish are chiefly: (a) The decrease in the catch of Cod and the loss of time; and (b) The destruction of gear.

Lanteigne
Patrick ~~Lanteigne~~ said: " Dog-fish cause a great deal of damage to the Cod fishery, causing us to lose sixty to seventy-five quintals to the boat. They also cause us to lose hooks and trawls. Each net costs about Fifteen Dollars."

Luke Letagne said: I used to catch one

hundred

hundred and fifty quintals in a season. Last season I caught only thirty quintals. In the past I have often caught twenty quintals in a day. We now catch about twenty cod in one day because of the large number of Dog-fish. They destroy our lines and hooks and we have to cease fishing." Octave Paulin said:

" Dog-fish have been so numerous, I have often been prevented from fishing. One of my men got his hand poisoned from Dog-fish, and I suffered a loss of Three Hundred Dollars. When we catch them we cannot take them off the hook until we kill them."

Prosper Albert said: " The destruction the Dog-fish cause is immense. If nothing is done this year to exterminate them, I will have to give up fishing. I lost one hundred quintals of Cod-fish last year on account of Dog-fish. In five weeks I could take only ten quintals. I lost two nets. My losses last year amounted to over Four Hundred Dollars."

Joseph Chiasson said: " One night last fall one of my nets had about twenty barrels of herring in it, and I came ashore for help to raise it. When I returned, all the fish had been eaten by the Dog-fish except two or three barrels, and the net partially destroyed. On the herring banks one season alone, they damaged nets to the value of One Thousand Dollars. I have caught as many as eighty Dog-fish at one time in my herring net."

Seraphin
Seraphin ~~Dolien~~ said: " Once last fall we had set our trawl, and when we raised it, there was not a hook on it, and we had to come home."

Joseph A. Hachet said: "The price of Cod averages Four Dollars per quintal. The loss in La-meque alone would reach Seven Thousand Dollars for Cod-fish in one year; for herring, Three Thousand

Dollars, and nets and gear, One Thousand Dollars."

^{Uruguay}
O. Rojas said: " My loss last year amounted to Four Hundred Dollars. Many weeks I could not take anything at Cod-fishing, owing to the numerous Dog-fish. As quickly as we would put our nets in for bait the Dog-fish would destroy them."

- POINTS IN THE LOBSTER FISHERY EVIDENCE -

THE lobsters inside the harbour are later. Charles L. Robichaud said: " The present season does not suit us. We cannot pack inside before the 12th. or 13th. May. Outside they can generally pack eight or ten days before us."

Colson Hubbard said: " Caraquet Harbour is different from all other parts of the shore. It is land-locked. The season's average in Caraquet is about twenty-eight cases to the boat. Outside of Miscou the average is a good deal larger, some boats taking one hundred cases, because they can begin fishing earlier than inside fishermen. Last year was an average ~~of~~ opening. We began on the 11th. May; this year it will be the 20th. May before we can begin packing."

- SALE OF BROKEN MEAT -

Gervais Therriault said: I am a pound,- (broken meat),- fisherman, and we want to have this privilege of selling broken lobster meat, because we are not rich enough to put up regular canneries. It is a good means of earning our living, and a good many could not live without it. There are seventeen pound fishermen, who fish on average two hundred and twenty-five traps each, and sell their fish to the canneries.

Basile

~~Florida~~ Doucet said: We have nothing to say against the pound fishermen. They do not injure us, -(the canners),- but I do think their number is now sufficiently large.

Lionel
Jean ~~Doucet~~ said: I fish and sell to packers. I sell the meat ready for packing, and get twelve to thirteen cents per pound for it. If our lobsters are boiled, it takes two or three hours to reach the canners. We put the meat in covered wooden or tin vessels.

Colson Hubbard said: " The pound fishermen have as much right to fish as we have, and should not be stopped."