

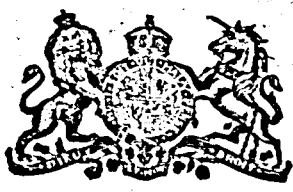
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1910

LOBSTER FISHERY 2 copies

REPORT  
OF  
COMMANDER WILLIAM WAKEHAM, M.D.  
*Officer in Charge of the Gulf Fisheries Division,  
Province of Quebec*  
OF AN  
INVESTIGATION INTO THE LOBSTER FISHERY

PURSUANT TO  
Order in Council dated June 21, 1909



OTTAWA  
PRINTED BY C. H. PARMELEE, PRINTER TO THE KING'S MOST  
EXCELLENT MAJESTY  
1910

*C. A. Matthews*

Report of Commander William Wakeham, M.D., Officer in Charge of the Gulf Fisheries Division, Province of Quebec, of an Investigation into the Lobster Fishery, pursuant to Order in Council dated June 21, 1909.

GASPÉ BASIN, January 6, 1910.

The Honourable L. P. BRODEUR,  
Minister of Marine and Fisheries,  
Ottawa, Canada.

SIR,—In compliance with the terms of an order in council, approved June 21, 1909, appointing the undersigned a commissioner to visit the chief points in the maritime provinces and the province of Quebec, where the lobster industry is carried on, and to take evidence concerning the condition of the fishery, for the information of the Standing Committee of Parliament on Marine and Fisheries, I beg to say that I began the work in question at the Magdalen islands on July 12 and finished it at Grand Manan on September 22.

I was assisted during the first half of the inquiry by Mr. W. H. Dickson, of Ottawa, and for the latter half by Mr. C. A. Matthews. As both these gentlemen had assisted in taking the evidence already gathered by the committee at Ottawa during the session of 1908 and 1909, and were fully aware of the wishes and views of the committee in the matter, it is needless to say that they were of the greatest assistance to me in many ways.

I was also fully instructed by the Superintendent of Fisheries in a very ample letter of directions dated June 1 as to the nature and trend of the evidence already taken, and the main points which it would be necessary to establish with a view to the preparation of further regulations for the future control of the lobster industry.

An itinerary had been prepared after consultation with the members of the committee by the gentleman whom it was first expected would be detailed to hold the inquiry; a copy of this programme was furnished me, and as far as it went I followed it closely. It began at Lamèque, in northern New Brunswick, and ended at Liscombe, Nova Scotia, taking in all of northern New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the coast of Nova Scotia from the boundary line in the Strait of Northumberland as far along the Atlantic coast as Liscombe, including the whole of Cape Breton. From Liscombe to Grand Manan we prepared a further itinerary, after consultation with the members of the committee and others whom we considered competent to advise us.

As the time was limited the work had to be hurried, and we were obliged to restrict the number of meeting places to two, or at most three, for each county. The dates of meeting had to be established beforehand, and naturally had to be lived sharply up to or confusion would have followed. Posters were sent to the postmasters at all the points fixed for taking evidence, and where the gentlemen of the committee or others consulted wished to have a further supply of these, they were furnished.

In some cases when requested by the members interested, notices of the meetings were published in the local papers or special invitations to attend sent to gentlemen whom it was desired to have testify. In view of the long seacoast line to be covered, and the short time at our disposal, I do not see that we could have done much better than we did.

No time has been lost in preparing the evidence, which should be ready for the first meeting of the committee.

As might have been expected, the evidence is extremely conflicting, and from it alone it would be difficult to base any regulations for the future of the lobster fishery.

It is not necessary for me to go into any detail as to the life history of the lobster; all this has been already submitted to the committee by the Commissioner of Fisheries much more thoroughly than I could ever hope to do it; nor is it necessary for me to furnish statistics as to the history and condition of the lobster packing industry or of the live lobster trade; all this I find has been very thoroughly done by the Superintendent of Fisheries in the Departmental Report for 1908-9 just published.

It therefore only remains for me to submit a synopsis of the evidence taken, together with such remarks and suggestions as my personal knowledge of the fishery may warrant me in making.

The pioneers of the lobster canning industry in Canada were either United States citizens, who had been engaged in it along the northern shores of the United States, or Canadians who had learned the methods of the industry from our neighbours and saw the wonderful opening which our own waters offered for its continuance here. This was hastened by the fact that the fishery was already being exhausted wherever lobster canneries were operated from Massachusetts to Maine.

Some canning of lobsters had already been done in the Gulf of St. Lawrence before the arrival of the United States canners. It had been customary to can salmon, as in those days prior to the construction of the Intercolonial railroad the trade in fresh salmon had not developed, refrigerator cars and freezers being then unknown, the bulk of the salmon caught was either salted or smoked. Those who put up canneries for salmon usually canned a small quantity of lobsters; but there was no distinct and general lobster fishery carried on. Lobsters were found everywhere in great abundance, and when washed ashore after a heavy gale of wind were collected and spread on the land for manure; a few old country people fished lobster pots made of willow or alder twigs laced over a framework, much in the shape of the old-fashioned straw beehives, with an opening in the top through which the lobster crawled to find the bait below, or a simple meshing of net was laced in an iron hoop on this netting, being lashed the bait, usually a cod head. This hoop was sunk off the end of a wharf or from a boat, and when the lobster was felt at the bait or seen on the hoop the whole was rapidly hauled up.

A favourite amusement for young people in those days was the flambeauing of lobsters, when they were hauled out of their nests and hiding places among the rocks and kelp with a cod hook on the end of a pole. Where scores of lobsters could be gaffed in this way in a couple of hours in the inner bays and harbours forty years ago simply for amusement, not one can be found now.

As soon as canneries were established and the use of the present traps became general, the lobsters seemed to be held outside by the bait, and we ceased to find them, until later in the season, in the harbours and coves where they formerly abounded.

A noticeable instance of the way lobsters are held by the bait is furnished at Carleton bay, in the head of the Bay Chaleur. At one time lobsters were as plentiful there as anywhere else in the Bay of Chaleur; but now they are never found until after the close of the open season, when the baiting having stopped below, they move up into the shoaler waters at the head of the bay. This same thing is noticeable everywhere where the same conditions exist. I think that there can be no doubt that lobsters travel further and go into deeper water than we have been used to believe.

I am aware of several instances where cod fishermen have taken lobsters in ninety fathoms of water.

There are certain facts clearly established by the evidence in connection with the history and methods of the fishery which are known to every one who has had anything to do with the matter. These seem to me to offer very clearly a guide to the regulations which should be ordained for the future control of the industry.

1. That when the canning industry was first established on our coasts lobsters were abundant everywhere from Grand Manan to the Strait of Belle Isle, which is the northern limit of the lobster.

2. The evidence of the older fishermen and packers shows that the lobsters have decreased in size everywhere, and that the pack is being maintained by the greatly increased efforts of the fishermen, more boats are fishing, more traps are used, the traps used are improved in that they hold practically everything that enters them; with lighter traps, and motor boats, fishermen are fishing in deeper waters and covering more ground generally.

3. The amount of gear used has steadily increased, and the tendency is still further to increase it, instead of the old-fashioned trap or double-enders made the full length of the lath, with an opening in each end and a space of at least one and one-half inches between the slats we now have in general use smaller and lighter traps, known as the 'wheeler,' 'diamond,' 'parlour' or 'jail' trap, and the space between the slats has been reduced in some localities until there is but little more than half an inch left. The entrances in this modern trap all lead to a chamber, 'parlour' or 'jail,' which it is difficult for the lobster to escape from, by the road he has entered, while he cannot escape between the slats as the undersized ones did in the old trap with its wider space.

4. The universal practice of the fishermen is to meet the incoming schools of lobsters in deep water at the opening of the season, and as the season advances to follow the fish into shoal waters.

5. The great preponderance of the evidence shows, that as the season advances the proportion of small undersized lobsters taken in the inshore shoaler waters, increases. It is also very generally admitted that as the season advances the catch of female lobsters with extruded eggs is greatly increased. All this tallies with what we know must occur if the lobster approaches the shoaler, and consequently warmer water, for the purpose of hastening the development of the egg and facilitating the moulting process. It therefore follows that the greatest destruction and waste takes place towards the close of the ordinary fishing season, and that when extensions have been granted fishing has been permitted at a time calculated to do the greatest possible injury.

6. It is shown that it is impossible to have one universal close time for the whole coast, the climatic and ice conditions are such that different sections of the coast demand different seasons.

7. It is clearly proved that the regulation as regards the size limit is not observed, that it never was observed; that from the earlier times canners never refused small lobsters; that they are to-day taking smaller lobsters than they did years ago is shown beyond doubt by the style of trap now used, which captures and holds lobsters that would easily have escaped from the old fashioned engine.

8. It is almost universally admitted that a strict enforcement of even an eight inch limit would close up the canneries and shut off the fishermen. Captain Gordon's report of twenty years ago shows that a strict enforcement of the then nine inch limit would have closed down both canner and fishermen; that it was necessary to put an armed guard on the cannery to enforce the regulation. This condition is intensified to-day and it is true not only of the Gulf of St. Lawrence but also of the fishery everywhere. In fact, the conditions are really worse on the Atlantic coast, as with a nine inch limit for market lobsters the canners have only the undersized ones left to can. Wherever the facilities for carrying on the live lobster trade exist the canners must be reduced to the use of undersized lobsters.

9. The evidence as regards the berried lobster regulation is very doubtful. A few acknowledge to, at some time, having violated this themselves, a great many believe that others than themselves have violated it. There is no doubt that it has been constantly violated. Berried lobsters have gone into the boilers intact and where the canners have tried to be strict the berries have been washed off outside. There is, however, no doubt that an increasing number of fishermen are becoming alive to the necessity for protecting this lobster, and it is the case, that the formation of Fishermen's Unions with the consequent bringing together of the fishermen and the resulting

discussions as to the regulations, and future of the fishery, has greatly conduced to a better observance of the regulations.

10. As regards the traps the evidence undoubtedly shows that the tendency has been to narrow the space between the slats and to lessen the size of the mesh in the end, so as to hold the smaller lobsters required to keep up the pack. The trap as now built has generally a space of less than one inch between the slats and when the trap has become water soaked the space is still further contracted.

The first indication of a failing fishery, due to over fishing, is always a decrease in the average size of the fish, and this is invariably met by the fishermen by making the mesh of the trap or gill-net smaller. We have this plainly shown in the gill-net fisheries of the great lakes and just the same practice has been followed by the lobster fishermen in reducing the 'mesh' in his trap. As the average run of the lobsters became smaller it became necessary, if the catch had to be kept up, to narrow the outlets and to make them more complicated so as to hold everything that entered the trap. Some difference of opinion exists as to the extent to which small lobsters try to escape out of the trap; but by the fact of the increasing ingenuity which is everywhere being exercised to hold them, it is shown more clearly and positively than it could be by any verbal evidence that they did escape under former conditions with the original traps and that the modern engine is being perfected so as to hold them. We know that when disturbed and alarmed a lobster can move short distances with great speed and wonderful accuracy. Any one who has ever fished for lobsters must have noticed how quickly and accurately they can shoot themselves out of the funnel-like openings in the end of the traps.

There can be no doubt whatever that at least a proportion of small lobsters would escape out of the traps were a sufficient opening allowed and it is just as reasonable to insist on a fixed opening between the slats, and in the mesh of the net, at the end of the traps as it is in the case of salmon or whitefish gill-nets.

11. As regards the matter of licensing canneries some difference of opinion exists; but a majority are of opinion that any one showing his ability and competence to operate a cannery should be allowed to do so. All are agreed that the canneries should be subject to inspection and that a certain standard should be insisted upon. The general opinion of those most competent to judge is that it is not necessary to have the product inspected officially; that this is pretty well provided for already by the purchasing agents, who visit the canneries to inspect and check the work during the packing season. There are certain marks or brands, particularly of the older packers, which are accepted everywhere. No official inspection would carry as strong a guarantee as these well known brands already do.

All are agreed that the recent decision of the minister to grant what are known as 'co-operative licenses' furnishes fishermen with the means of freeing themselves from any disposition on the part of the canner to unfairly keep down the price paid them for their product.

I would strongly advise against the practice of issuing a great number of licenses to one firm or individual, especially along the same stretch of coast. This is neither in the interest of the fishermen or the fishery. It is quite reasonable that large operators should expect to control a number of licenses; but these should be scattered over the coast, and even to the larger operators there should be some limit to the number of licenses issued.

12. As regards the proposition of licensing the fisherman before allowing him to fish for lobsters, a great difference of opinion exists. The majority of fishermen believe the idea to be a good one, and hold that it would have a good effect, particularly as regards the protection of the berried lobster. Others, and with these I certainly agree, think that it would only complicate matters; that it would entail a great deal of extra work; that very few fishermen would feel themselves bound by it, and that if fishermen generally became informers, one on the other, it would lead to quarrelling, with destruction of gear, &c.

13. The majority of fishermen own their own boats and gear; but in the Strait of Northumberland, northern New Brunswick and to a considerable extent in Prince Edward Island, the boat and gear is owned by the canner. Where this is the case the majority of the men fishing for the canner are not bona fide fishermen, but shore men of various callings, largely the poorer class of farmers, who find it difficult to get ready cash in any other way. The lobster fishery offers the first employment to be had in the spring, and the payments made in connection with it are generally made in cash. This class of fishermen is less likely to show consideration for laws and regulations governing the fishery than the regular fishermen, who depend upon the sea for their living, and who when they find the lobster fishery slackening off turn at once to other branches of the fisheries. These farmer fishermen, not being altogether dependent on the fishing and hoping by its aid in a short time to clear themselves, want to make all they can out of it for the present and are utterly careless of it for the future.

14. As to the existence of a combine among packers to keep down prices, the feeling is general among the fishermen that something of the kind exists; but this is only a suspicion. Packers invariably deny the existence of any such arrangement, and there is no proof whatever that anything of the kind exists. Considering the considerable number of packers and the hosts of men employed in various ways in connection with the industry, afloat and ashore, one cannot but remark as to the general good feeling that exists. In the beginning of the industry lobsters were invariably bought by count, and the price ranged as low as thirty cents per hundred. As the run of lobsters became smaller undersized ones were taken at two for one; but when they got smaller still the custom changed, and payment is now generally made by weight, market fish being still bought by count. The history of this change in the method of payment, together with the nearly universal practice of narrowing the slats and making the trap more of a jail than it was originally, offers the best possible proof of the decrease in the average size of the fish and the methods adopted, all round, to capture, hold and dispose of the undersized fish to the packer.

Competition among packers did exist in 1907 and 1908. Prices in some localities, where competition was keen, ran up to \$5.50, and even more, per hundred pounds. This was altogether too much and more than the packers were ever warranted in paying. Some retired from the competition and closed down. The thing was overdone and the natural results followed. Stocks increased, the market was glutted and in the spring of 1909 packers were forced to offer much lower prices to the fishermen. Perhaps as much too low as they were too high the year before. The result was a good deal of dissatisfaction and ill-feeling as between fishermen and cannerymen and where the fishermen were organized and leaders came to the front among them with the instinct and training for organization and strikes the material for a very pretty row was at hand. After all, considering the conditions and the sudden drop in prices there was very little friction. In most places prices were slightly advanced before the end of the season and the feeling is general that in 1910 a fairer or more remunerative price will be paid the fishermen, in which case we will find no great demand for co-operative licenses.

In the matter of these co-operative licenses care will have to be exercised, as I am afraid that in some instances parties who have been refused licenses on their own account have managed to associate with themselves a sufficient number of fishermen to obtain a co-operative license, the fishermen having put nothing whatever into the co-operation and not even selling their fish to it.

15. As regards the granting of canning licenses to aliens there is really no feeling. The aliens were largely the pioneers of the industry. They have been liberal and straight in their dealings with the fishermen, their brands command the confidence of the markets. In the early days some of their managers and many of their skilled operators were brought in from the United States. This was unavoidable. This is no longer the case. These men either settled here and became Canadian citizens or their places were taken by Canadians. Every particle of the material and all the

labour employed in the industry is Canadian, the only alien thing about it being the capital. Of course it is quite reasonably felt that viewing the great extent of the industry to-day, when new licenses have to be issued resident Canadians should have the preference.

I believe I have in the above clauses recited as fairly as possible all the principal facts connected with the conduct and prosecution of the fishery, as brought forth by the evidence, and there remains, therefore, only, the question of the right divisions to be made of the coast, with the regulations best adapted for each.

There is one thing to be remarked and that is the wonderful vitality of the lobster fishery. The methods and practices of the fishermen have been destructive from every point of view. The berried lobster has been destroyed from the beginning. Under-sized and immature fish have been taken and utilized by the canner from the earliest days of the industry. The pack is being maintained by taking these small fish in annually increasing numbers, while even the close season, admittedly the most easily enforced of all the regulations, has not everywhere been rigorously observed. As regards this matter there is no doubt that the regulation affecting the close season is now being more strictly enforced than it used to be. Yet it is shown by the evidence and more clearly still by Mr. Venning's statistics that the pack shows no falling off. Those of us who are on the spot know that it is being maintained, as the evidence shows, by increased effort and more destructive methods. What we have to fear and what thoughtful fishermen and cannery are anxious about is a sudden collapse. The fishery as it is being practised cannot stand the drain forever.

#### SUGGESTED COASTAL DIVISIONS.

*Division No. 1.*—All that portion of coast from the boundary of the State of Maine, east and north to a line running in a southeasterly direction seawards from St. George's Island, Halifax Harbour, this to include the waters about Grand Manan, the Bay of Fundy and St. Mary's Bay, being Division 'A' as outlined in the report of the Lobster Commission of 1898.

*Division No. 2.*—The waters east and north of the line running out of Halifax Harbour, including all that part of the coast of Nova Scotia, extending to the Gut of Canso and including the waters of the Gut to its western end and all that part of Richmond county to Red Point, being subdivision 'B' of the Lobster Commission of 1898.

*Division No. 3.*—All the waters of Cape Breton from Red Point, extending along the east and north shore to Cape St. Lawrence, being subdivision 'C' of the Lobster Commission of 1898.

*Division No. 4.*—The waters of Cape Breton south from Cape St. Lawrence to the western entrance of the Gut of Canso, the shore of the mainland of Nova Scotia from the western end of the Gut of Canso to the boundary line between that province and New Brunswick. All the waters of Prince Edward Island, save that portion extending in the Strait of Northumberland from Carleton Head to West Point. All the waters of northern New Brunswick from Chockfish river, north and west to the mouth of the Restigouche river, and all the waters of the province of Quebec fronting on the county of Bonaventure and the mainland of Gaspé county.

*Division No. 5.*—The waters of the Strait of Northumberland comprised within the line drawn from the boundary between the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to Carleton Head, Prince Edward Island, and extending west to a line drawn from Chockfish river to West Point, Prince Edward Island, being subdivision 'B' of the Lobster Commission of 1898, extended from Cape Tormentine east so as to include the coast line of New Brunswick up to its eastern boundary.

*Division No. 6.*—The waters of the Magdalen islands.

*Division No. 7.*—The waters of the County of Saguenay, on the north shore of the gulf, including the Island of Anticosti.

## REGULATIONS.

The following regulations to be enforced in the above divisions:—

*Division No. 1.*—Fishing to begin on November 15 and end on May 1, with a size limit of ten and one-half inches, or better its equivalent, of four and three-quarter inch carapace measurement. In the County of Charlotte, New Brunswick, I would prohibit the canning of lobsters, as if they are permitted to be canned there will be smuggling of undersized lobsters from the waters of Maine. If it is found profitable for lobster dealers or fishermen to hold legal lobsters in licensed pounds during the legal season, so that they may be held and shipped as the market demands, I see no objection to this permission being granted, all lobsters held in these pounds to be liberated at the close of the open season.

*Division No. 2.*—A season extending from April 1 to June 15, with no size limit.

*Division No. 3.*—A season extending from May 1 to July 15, with no size limit.

*Division No. 4.*—A season extending from April 20 to July 1, with no size limit.

*Division No. 5.*—A season extending from August 10 to October 15, with no size limit.

I cannot believe that it can be right to permit the fishing and canning of lobsters in the Strait of Northumberland during the month of July. If the season, as I have fixed it, is not acceptable, then the same dates as I have suggested for the rest of the island and northern New Brunswick should be made to apply in this district. A great many fishermen on both shores favour a later fishing season than that now in force. I believe that even a two weeks later season than I have suggested would be better from a protective point of view. There is also a question as to whether the fall season would not be the best for the whole south shore of the island.

*Division No. 6.*—A season extending from May 1 to July 20, with no size limit.

*Division No. 7.*—A season extending from May 20 to August 1, with no size limit.

The use of a standard trap to be everywhere enforced after two years notice, to have a clear space of one inch and a quarter between the slats when in use, and a mesh of three inches,—extension measure—in the ends, when netting is used, and no other kind of engine to be used anywhere for the taking of lobsters.

No fishing for lobsters to be permitted anywhere in less than two fathoms of water and no fishing in lagoons or shallow bays having narrow inlets, where the lobsters do not winter and in which they seem to seek asylum during the warm weather of July, August and September.

The berried lobster to be everywhere rigidly protected. This lobster to be replaced carefully in the water by the fishermen on the ground where the trap is being fished. The number of these lobsters taken during the season is not so great that the fishermen will lose much time in placing them carefully back in the water. I cannot feel that it is ~~the~~ right that the fisherman should have to be paid for the protection of this lobster, he more than any one else is interested in her protection, and he must be either *educated* or *compelled* to protect her. Having to compensate him for doing so, seems to me a vicious practice.

The matter of new licenses to can is one that should be dealt with by the department on a report from the inspector, who should know the conditions and necessities in each locality in his inspectorate and be prepared to say whether new licenses should be issued or not. I do not see why this matter cannot be dealt with just as easily and as fairly as we now deal with applications for salmon-net licenses or trap-net berths.



Canneries should be visited regularly by the inspectors, who should report to the department in every case where the conditions are such that a perfectly clean and pure product is not assured, and after one warning, in such a case the license should be cancelled. There are canning licenses now issued to people who are canning in their houses and barns, where the sanitary conditions are such as to make the food product there prepared, quite unsafe. Modern hygiene demands that this sort of thing be no longer possible. This sort of cannery is always run by the poorest class of operators. These are the people that fish themselves and can their own product. They are generally the ones who wish to fish in the lagoons and shallow bays and who operate out of season. By shutting down on them we will lay ourselves open to the charge of crushing the poor man, &c., but what will you have. Anything in the shape of a standard cannery will put them out of business at once.

I consider that the license fee for canning should be considerably raised. The present fee is a nonsensical one. A sufficient sum should be raised by means of this fee to pay, in part at least, for the extra cost of guardianship.

Any regulations imposed should be carried out universally and absolutely. They should be such as it is possible to enforce with a reasonable staff. If it is decided to adopt the standard trap and the strict protection of the berried lobster, this can best be done by officers afloat among the fishermen, and for this we will require active, reliable young men and a fleet of wholesome motor boats, able to keep about among the fishermen where they are hauling their traps. All the officers and men employed at this work will have to be better paid than most of them are at present, and we will require their whole time during the lobster fishing season.

I have recommended a long open season and a large size limit for No. 1 division, because in this division the facilities exist for carrying on the live or fresh market fishery, which if not absolutely paramount at present, soon will be. With the development of this branch of the fishery new markets will open. We will not forever be confined to Boston. With more rapid transit and increased cold storage facilities live lobsters can be sent much further west than they are at present, and even the European markets can be supplied.

I am informed by leading hotel men and club stewards that the demand is for broilers. This requires a live lobster; but for the ordinary boiled lobster I should greatly prefer one boiled in salt water, absolutely fresh when he is landed and cooked, carefully and neatly packed and held or forwarded in cold storage, to the market where he is to be consumed. I cannot believe that a lobster taken out of deep, cool water and exposed in an open boat to the sun and weather for hours before being brought ashore, then being transferred to a car, floating at the surface in shallow water and held there unfed for several days, before being again taken out packed in a close box or barrel and forwarded several hundred miles to a market where, if he is not immediately wanted, he is again placed in a surface car, floating between the wharfs in some city harbour, exposed to contamination from sewage and other pollutions, where he is again held some days, or until the demand occurs, possibly in some inland town, when he is again packed in a crate and forwarded by express to his point of final consumption, can be in perfect condition, and those who eat him have very little idea of what a really fresh lobster is like. The boiled lobster of the future will be cooked where he is first landed and held in cold storage until he is wanted. For several years at Anticosti it has been the practice to cook lobsters quite fresh from the water and hold them in a cool room. I have eaten these lobsters in the fall, they having been put up in June. They were in perfect condition and no one could have told that they were not fresh from the boiler.

I quite understand that protests will be made from many quarters as to the suggestions I have made for the best regulations for division No. 1, but in the face of the price received by fishermen for canning lobsters as compared with that paid for the market fish, and viewing the possibilities of the fresh lobster trade, coupled with the knowledge that in two seasons the undersized lobster of to-day will have grown to

market dimensions, when he will fetch from five to ten times the price that he does to-day, I can hardly see how any intelligent person can object to the proposed regulation.

I can only see two ways of protecting the lobster. One is by means of a large size limit, when he may be safely fished for through a longer season, and the other by so curtailing the fishing season and regulating the engine in which the lobster is captured as to permit of the escape of such a percentage of immature fish that we will hope to allow of the survival each season of enough to keep up the supply.

As to the question of lobster hatcheries and pounds I do not feel that I am competent to express an opinion, this is a matter best dealt with by the experts of the department. The evidence shows that there is a pretty general feeling in favour of the establishment of more hatcheries and that wherever pounds can be supplied they should be under the direct management of the department. To the ordinary layman it would seem that the true way of protecting the breeding female lobster must be to return her at once to her natural hatching ground, hatching lobsters being a different business altogether from hatching fish.

There are a few other matters, such as the labelling of the cases, the prohibition of what are known as 'cracking houses,' &c., which I hardly need to express an opinion about. These minor questions are best dealt with by the departmental officials, after consultation with their outside agents, the inspectors.

In conclusion I beg to submit this report as the honest effort of one who has had over forty years connection with the fishing coast and its people, to suggest some practical and plain regulations for the preservation of the fishery, which it should be possible to enforce, with a minimum of friction and cost.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM WAKEHAM,

*Special Commissioner and Inspector of Fisheries for the Gulf of St. Lawrence.*

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