

APPENDIX No. 14.

REPORT OF W. H. VENNING, ESQ., INSPECTOR OF FISHERIES FOR THE PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK, FOR THE YEAR 1875.

St. JOHN, N. B., 31st December, 1875.

Hon. A. J. SMITH,
Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

SIR,—The reports and returns of the local fishery officers show a falling off in the total catch of last season as compared with that of the previous one. This decline is almost wholly attributable to the very small catch of salmon, which has been universal this year. Similar reports of a partial failure of the salmon fishery reach us from Europe, and is attributed to some natural causes not yet understood.

RESTIGOUCHE COUNTY.

The opening of the season was very unfavourable for salmon fishing, owing to high freshets which prevented the setting of nets as early as usual. Overseer Ferguson reports that in the lower part of the river the largest run of fish passed up before nets could be set. The low price offered for salmon no doubt had a discouraging effect on the exertions of many fishermen, but still all accounts agree in reporting a very bad season for salmon in this county. Overseer McMillan states that he found it impossible to get full returns, and expresses his conviction that many fishermen did not give more than two-thirds of their actual catch. At present there are no means of compelling fishermen to give sworn statements of their catch, and short returns are made to avoid paying the tax. The low prices obtained for canned lobsters this season has caused a large decline in the pursuit of this fishery.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY.

In the upper part of this county, Overseer Hickson reports that the salmon fishery was not so good as it was last year, though the Salmon Beach district gave about an average yield. He also complains of the impossibility of getting full returns, and strongly urges the adoption of some means by which this result may be secured. He says it is difficult to tell to what extent the rivers in his county were stocked this fall, owing to the water keeping so high during the whole summer. In the spawning season the tributaries of the Nepissiguit were well supplied, but the main river was too high to know much about it. He fears that much of the ova has been deposited in places that will be dry when the water falls during the winter, and that it will be destroyed by the frost and ice. The Tetagauche was fairly stocked, as the fish went freely up the pass in the dam.

In the lower part of the county, Overseer Savoy reports a good catch of all kinds of fish. Of spring herrings there was more than an average catch, but the yield of alewives was less. The catch of codfish and mackerel was less than that of last year, owing to heavy winds which prevailed during the best fishing season. Fall herrings gave a fair average yield. Overseer Savoy says that the recent erection of beacon lights, at the several gullies along the coast has been of great service to the fishermen, and has on several occasions been the means of preventing loss of life and property. Some disturbances occurred last season among the fishermen on Caraquet and Shippegan herring banks, which have already been reported at length. The only