

Fishing Grounds of the Future

By PISCATOR

RED Indians are more easily exterminated than game fish, if the history of this continent is to be believed. Nevertheless, the game fish of North America are not so numerous nor so accessible as in the days of our grandfathers. The United States Isaac Wilton takes his rod in hand and "hikes" for Canada when he wants real good fishing. His own streams have been exhausted by the poachers and made uninhabitable by the polluting streams of commerce and civilisation. Even in certain parts of Canada, where population is densest, the same result is apparent. Muskoka is not the fish preserve it once was. The Rice Lake district is having a struggle for its life. The Rideau Lakes have still plenty of green bass but not many of the black. The Eastern townships have gone back a little in this respect as have some once-famous waters in the Maritime Provinces. Where the salmon runs well in New Brunswick and Eastern Quebec, the streams are owned by wealthy clubmen who maintain these preserves at great expense.

Nevertheless without going far beyond the centres of population, there is much fishing to be had in Canada. Further, there is so much new territory to be opened up, so many new lakes and streams to be discovered, that another hundred years must pass before even exploration ceases. The salmon streams of British Columbia and the trout streams of the Rockies are being yearly increased in number by the explorations of the prospector and the engineer. The central portion of that province is only now being explored, and the north is still unknown. Away north of Edmonton and Prince Albert are streams and lakes now whipped only by the clumsy net of the trapper. In Northern Ontario and Quebec, however, is the greatest fishing reserve on the continent—perhaps in the world. There is ample room in this vast territory, studded with thousands of lakes and ribbed out of tens of thousands of streams, to plant a hundred thousand fishing clubs. If the lover of sport will but exercise his influence there will be grand sport there for centuries to come.

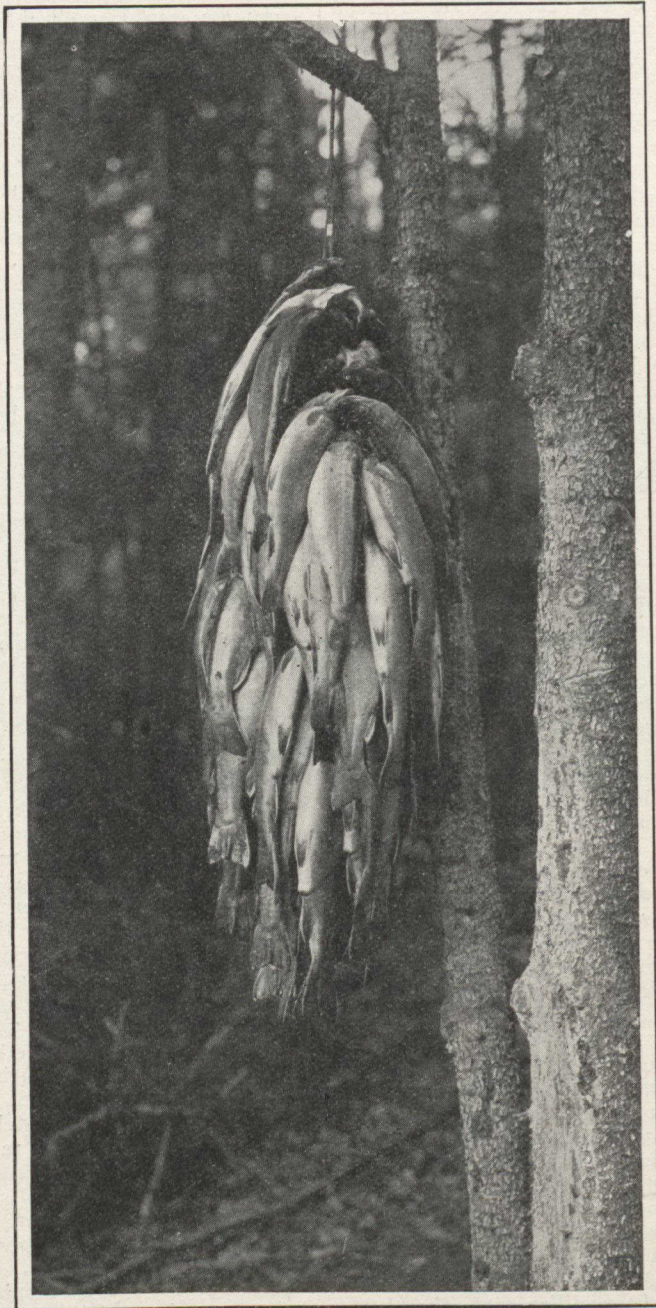
A few weeks ago, Mr. E. T. D. Chambers, the well known authority on fishing, and Mr. Charlton of the Grand Trunk penetrated to the headwaters of the St. Maurice to inspect the territory of the Sagamo Fishing and Hunting Club, a new organisation. They went in over the La Tuque branch of the Quebec and Lake St. John Railway (now Canadian Northern Quebec). From La Tuque they proceeded up the St. Maurice to the La Croche and thence to a chain of lakes, chief among which are Kennedy, Clair and Little Clair. Here the Sagamo Club will have its home, and near here the National Transcontinental is being built. The results of their visit is more information as to the scenery, the climate and the fishing possibilities of the region. The accompanying photographs give a summary more forcible than words and phrases.

As the National Transcontinental and other railways are pushed through this great region, there may be many Sagamos. The possibilities are almost unlimited. The railway will, of course, only open up the general route, and the canoe must do the rest. Some of the finest trout in the world inhabit these northern waters which in character are like those of the famous Nepigon. The devotees of the bass, the land-locked salmon, the maskinonge, and even of the famous Onananiche may talk and boast of the fighting qualities of their favourites but there is no finer sport in the world than playing a trout in the cool waters of Northern Canada. To the fisherman so-called, who snaps his fish from river to bank with one quick pull, it makes little difference

whether he is landing mud-turtles or saw-logs; but to him who loves the play up and down stream and the final scenes in a fair fight, these northern waters will long contain the materials for new stories and sweeter dreams. The lighter the rod and the finer the line, the more brilliant the battle and the greater the victory. When such sport is obtainable amid the most beautiful and exhilarating surroundings, far from the hum and jar of the machinery of commerce with the air pure and rare because of the considerable altitude, there is something to be added to the compelling qualities of the sport itself.

The greatest need in this country to-day, so far as fishing is concerned, is an enlightened and interested public opinion. There are plenty of laws on the provincial statute books, but there is no public opinion compelling their enforcement. Thousands of tourists pull six and seven inch black bass out of the lakes and rivers with a full knowledge that the law limits them to fish measuring eight inches in length. It is the same in many other cases. The prospector, the construction camp gang and the timber gang do not hesitate to use nets out of season and even go so far as to blacken their souls with the guilt of killing fish by dynamite explosions. The settler fishes through the ice in winter-time and hesitates not to take forbidden fish. There are men mean enough to take fish out of season for the purposes of gain, and the restaurants of the large cities find little difficulty in supplying fish in season or out.

All this, being interpreted, means a lack of public opinion. The game wardens are, like liquor inspectors, discouraged if they attempt to enforce the law with vigour and discernment. The game fish of Canada are worth millions of dollars annually to this country because of the increased railway traffic and annual expenditures of the thousands of fishermen who come north for a taste of the sport denied them at home. The railways are doing something towards restocking and preservation, and the Dominion Government seems inclined to assist them. More would be accomplished if all those interested directly, and indirectly would use their influence to prevent illegal and unsportsmanlike slaughter.



A catch of Speckled Trout killed in one afternoon, with four fly rods, at Sagamo Fishing and Hunting Club, in northern Quebec.