

personage than the premier, has declared that corruption in high places shall be exposed and punished. Let this system of indirect bribery of individuals and constituencies, through grants of public money, also cease. As for railways, it would be well to enquire if the time has not arrived when government aid should entirely cease. So far at least as eastern Canada is concerned, it would seem that the time has arrived when railways should be promoted for their commercial value, constructed solely upon a commercial basis, and not from the public treasury. Even in the new West, the day of government aid for railways, except perhaps in a very few instances, may fairly be considered as closed, from a standpoint of actual necessity. The opening up of the great northern regions, which will be a matter for not distant future consideration, may require special consideration. However, government aid to railways in a general sense, should be carefully considered, and if granted at all, only in very exceptional instances, such as the opening up of large portions of new country. THE COMMERCIAL has long opposed the granting public lands in aid of railways, and is still strongly opposed to this custom, from which the west has suffered considerably. Further grants to western roads, if given, should not be in the form of public lands, which should be held for free settlement. In granting charters for railways, care should be exercised. Charters should be given only to persons who are really earnest in their intention to carry out the proposed work. Railway charters should be rendered invaluable to scheming politicians or others who are simply desirous of acquiring a franchise to peddle for personal gain. This could be accomplished by requiring applicants for charters to deposit a round sum, under conditions which would guard against scheming of this nature. If the Abbott government will just take up this little matter, it will be a strong indication that they are in earnest in their declaration that corruption shall not go unpunished, and that they are desirous of presenting a clean record.

MANITOBA FISHERIES.

A letter has been sent out by the fishery department at Ottawa, signed by Charles H. Tupper, in reply to the complaints made by the press and people of Manitoba, against the new fishery regulations. This letter, though published some time ago, escaped our notice until a copy was received through the kindness of Senator Boulton, who has interested himself in the matter. The first point in this departmental letter is, that the new regulations will not apply to winter fishing, but it is intimated that new regulations governing winter fishing may be forthcoming later. If the proposed regulation for winter fishing are to be in keeping with the new order concerning summer fishing, it is earnestly to be hoped they will not be issued.

The next paragraph declares that the new regulations do not interfere with any privilege heretofore enjoyed by the settlers, as settlers were previously obliged to take out a license for 300 yards of gill nets, at the same fee. This is only partly true. Last year the one

license covered both winter and summer fishing. Secondly, there was not the same limitation as to quantity of net allowed. If there were it was not enforced. Under the \$2 license fee last year, small local fishermen operated with a quantity of nets in excess of 300 yards, the latter amount being too limited to be of any service for anything more than taking a few fish for domestic use. In the third place, we are informed that those who fished strictly for private use, did not take out licenses at all. There was no prohibition of the sale of fish caught under the \$2 license last year. Now there is. This makes a very decided difference.

The next point deals with the prohibition of fishing at the mouth of the Saskatchewan river, where the fish gather in the spawning season. We do not know that anybody here has opposed this provision, and therefore it is unnecessary to discuss it.

The next point in the letter is to the effect that these large fishing companies operating on Lake Winnipeg, have not fished in the southern portion of the lake for some years, because this portion has been "almost completely fished out." This we state emphatically, on the very best authority, is not the case. The large companies never fished at any time in the southern portion of the lake, for the reason that whitefish were never abundant in this part. The whitefish, we are reliably informed, were caught last winter in greater numbers than usual in the south end, but they never were so abundant here as to make it an object for the large exporting companies to fish in this portion. The whitefish are supposed to avoid the south end, on account of the water being dark or muddy from the inflow of the Red river. Further north, where they gather in vast numbers, the water is clear. Whitefish are just as plentiful as they ever were in the southern portion, but even if the opposite were the case, it would not prove that this end of the lake had been fished out. It is well known that the fish migrate from one part to another, and a scarcity where they had once been plentiful, might simply mean that they had moved to new feeding ground. In the southern portion of the lake, other species of fish are more abundant, such as pickerel, jackfish (pike), gold-eyes, mullet, tullibies, sturgeon, etc. It was this class of fish which were largely taken in the southern end of the lake, but which under the new regulations cannot be caught at all for sale. Even the "domestic" license allowed for fishing in the south end, calls for a five inch mesh, which is too large for most of the fish just named. As for the jackfish, they may readily be termed the shark of Lake Winnipeg. They are a poor fish at best, and destroy large numbers of the more valuable whitefish. It would be better if they were exterminated. Large numbers of these have been caught in the southern portion of the lake, both in the fall and winter, and sold for export to the States. If there is to be no fishing for sale in the southern end, these voracious fish will be allowed to increase, to the detriment of the whitefish. The sturgeon also, about which there has been talk of greater protection, are believed to feed upon whitefish eggs, and are thus very destructive. If this is the case, as is generally believed, it would be better if these fish were also exterminated.

The next paragraph in the departmental letter is the most ridiculous one of all. It shows an utter ignorance of the conditions prevailing regarding Lake Winnipeg fisheries, and is calculated to provoke a smile from those posted in the premises. This paragraph reads:—

"I fail to see how the changes are decidedly against the settler, when according to the regulations, the latter may fish in any portion of the lake (except the mouths of rivers)—not only in that part where the larger trader operates, but also in those portions from which they (the traders) are excluded. Should the settler desire to extend his operations, he is perfectly at liberty to do so by taking out a "commercial" license, the fee for which is \$10, and which gives him the privilege of using up to 5,000 yards of gill-net, but of course if he does this, he can no longer enjoy the benefit of the settlers' waters—the restricted portions then become applicable to him, and he is looked upon by the department and treated as a trader or "commercial" fisher, as opposed to his old standing as a 'settler.'"

It reads very nice, that the settler may become a commercial fisherman by paying \$8 extra. But what are the facts? He would require to have a capital of \$20,000 and upwards to become a commercial fisherman, under these new regulations. He would require first to own steamboats, also ice houses at convenient points on the north end of the lake, and freezers for storing his fish. The department is evidently ignorant, amongst other things, of the geography of the lake. The portion of the lake where commercial fishing is allowed, is so distant from market, that even to fish on a small scale for local purposes, a valuable plant would be required for storing the fish, and steamers would be necessary to bring them to market. The three companies now operating, have a very valuable plant, considerably in excess of the amount just named. They fish entirely for export, as the local trade is so small they do not care to bother with it. The condition therefore is, that while large quantities of fish are being caught every day, and stored in freezers for shipment to the States, the local market is frequently without fresh fish, and when they are to be had, the distance they have to be brought, reduces their quality in warm weather and increases their cost.

The closing paragraph of the letter intimates that the restrictions have been imposed in accordance with the "consensus of opinion." While there is no doubt a desire for proper protection of our Manitoba whitefish, we respectfully submit that the consensus of opinion here is altogether and entirely opposed to these new regulations. If the Ottawa department does not think so, let the opinion of the Winnipeg board of trade, or any other intelligent body here, be asked upon the question. We further submit, that Mr Wilmot, who was sent to report upon our fisheries, showed the most complete contempt for the opinions of everybody here, outside of a few government officials.

The fact of the matter is, these regulations defeat the very object for which it is supposed they were prepared. The intention is supposed to be, to preserve the fisheries in the interest of the people of Manitoba. The actual effect of the regulations is to prohibit fishing on a small scale for local purposes, while the big companies which are fishing for export, are catching more fish this season than ever before. These