

The conclusion arrived at by the Commission regarding the mesh of gill-nets was as is shown in the Report, Part II., page xxxi. in division 8—which is repeated here for more ready reference in this Review—as follows :—

“Further evidence had been obtained from practical fishermen and fish dealers relating to $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch extension mesh used in gill-nets for capturing white fish and salmon-trout. This evidence may be condensed as follows :—

“Should the present $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh be enlarged in size, a number of fishermen will be somewhat affected by it, in consequence of *not being permitted to catch the smaller, under-sized and immature fish* : and on the other hand unless the $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh is condemned and the 5-inch mesh re-established as the regular minimum size, *whitefish and salmon-trout will in a few years become extinct, and the public will be deprived of that valuable fish food.*”

The arguments in favour of re-establishing the former 5-inch mesh limit are very strong, if the consideration be in the line of conserving the salmon-trout and whitefish fisheries of the great lakes.

It will be observed that a large number of fishermen, when giving their testimony, stated that, since the lowering of the size of the gill-net mesh to $4\frac{1}{2}$ from 5 inches, a marked falling off had been experienced in the size of the fish which were put on the market, and it was also held by many that the quantity and quality of the fish had also been lowered—from the fact of such great numbers of small, undersized and immature fish which had been taken in these reduced meshes.

These smaller sized fish being more tender and delicate in their nature than the larger and more matured ones, do not stand the packing and shipping process nearly so well ; the result of which is that the smaller fish have to pass as number 2, with a consequent reduced price in the market.

Not only does the fisherman experience this direct loss in the value of the fish he captures, but he is also by the use of this small mesh, catching and destroying very great numbers of undersized trout, and whitefish which are immature, and therefore non-productive for the maintenance of their species ; whereas by the use of the 5-inch mesh many thousands of these smaller fish would, by getting another year's growth, attain the necessary size, and reach maturity for laying *millions upon millions of eggs*, by which the fisheries would be husbanded in a very much greater degree than can possibly be the case from the use of this $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh, which the fishermen themselves say “has brought down the quality, quantity and size of the fish now taken, as compared with former years.”

The following condensed testimony of witnesses, with their names, and pages, is given in support of *re-establishing the 5-inch mesh for gill-nets for trout and whitefish.*

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE.

As to the number of fishermen using and recommending the size of meshes in gill-nets is as follows :—

For the $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh 48 used or recommended it ; for the $4\frac{3}{4}$ -inch mesh 22 used or recommended it ; for the 5-inch mesh 34 used or recommended it ; for the $5\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh 18 used or recommended it ; for the 6-inch mesh 17 used or recommended it ; for the 7-inch mesh 3 used or recommended it.

The following were some of the remarks made by some of the substantial fishermen :—

“Now use $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh, formerly $4\frac{3}{4}$ -inch ; 5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ for fall fishing.” (p. 96, pt. I.)

“Last two years used $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, before that 5-inch and $4\frac{3}{4}$ -inch.” (p. 106, pt. I.)

“The 5-inch mesh should be the standard for whitefish and trout.” (p. 163, pt. I.)

“The $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh is too small, 5-inch should be adopted—the $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch has reduced the quantity and quality of fish, it catches too many small immature fish.” (p. 172, pt. I.)

“Never uses less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh.”

“There should be a uniform mesh of not less than 5 inches.” (p. 178, pt. I.)

“The reduction of mesh from 5 inches to $4\frac{1}{2}$ was not beneficial to the fishery because it took fish before they were mature.” (p. 209, pt. I.)