

"This shows that while there has been an increase during this period of nearly three hundred per cent. in Nova Scotia proper in the catch of salmon, there has been none whatever in the comparatively clean rivers of the Island of Cape Breton. The alewife fishery tells about the same story :

Year.	Catch of Alewives	Catch of Alewives
	in N. S. proper.	in Cape Breton.
1878	4,354 brls.	1,379 brls.
1879	6,110 "	3,279 "
1880	13,546 "	2,599 "
1881	19,636 "	2,837 "
1882	20,035 "	1,621 "
1883	16,845 "	1,503 "
1884	17,887 "	2,801 "
1885	14,271 "	2,443 "
1886	15,099 "	1,713 "
1887	15,077 "	1,513 "

"There is surely no evidence here of injury to the alewife fishery of Nova Scotia from sawdust nor of benefit to that of Cape Breton from its absence."

Mr. TUPPER. I understood the hon gentleman to admit that sawdust is noxious to the fish.

Mr. FLINT. No ; the point I make is that a distinction must be drawn between the sawdust itself and a combination of causes of which sawdust is one. I say that the injury to fish is caused, first, by inadequate fish-ways or fish-passes or by none at all ; second, by sawdust, combined with mill rubbish and other refuse which is thrown into the river. The result of my own enquiry is that, given proper fish-ways and with no other mill rubbish, the sawdust is innocuous or nearly so. While I admit that the authorities quoted by the Minister of Marine are very strong, they can only be answered by authorities of equal eminence, who take opposite ground on this subject, and here is the difficulty which laymen, who are desirous to reach a fair conclusion on the matter, have to contend with. I am now endeavouring to impress upon the mind of the Minister—for he and his colleagues must settle the question, unless there is legislation—that the exemption of this river is desirable on the ground that there is no reason why it should be kept under the regulations because of the deposit of sawdust. I quote again from the report :

"The Medway River in Queen's County has been afflicted with sawdust for a full century. The dams were opened for the ascent of fish in the year 1873-74, with the following results, and in spite of sawdust :—

Years.	Salmon.	Trout.	Alewives.	Smelts.
1878	22,871 lbs.	.....	70 lbs.	
1879	11,896 "	.....	262 "	2,000 lbs.
1880	5,323 "	.....	725 "	4,000 "
1881	7,615 "	.....	4,864 "	3,750 "
1882	8,388 "	.....	2,747 "	7,400 "
1883	21,169 "	915 lbs.	3,262 "	8,550 "
1884	20,315 "	1,650 "	3,082 "	15,200 "
1885	30,230 "	2,050 "	3,005 "	16,000 "
1886	22,005 "	2,378 "	3,505 "	18,250 "
1887	22,984 "	2,615 "	3,837 "	21,500 "
1888	18,450 "	2,775 "	2,916 "	22,700 "

If that is of any practical value, it goes to show that the effect of sawdust in the river is rather to increase and improve the facilities for fishing. I do not go so far as that, but I say that there is no proof of any injury being done to the fish by the sawdust itself. There must have been other causes to injure the growth and development of fish life. As was stated the other day by the hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. Gillmor), the question of the migration of fish and their reappearance is not yet understood even by the experts. We find every few years, as the Minister is aware, that there is an outcry that for some reason there has been a depletion of certain fish. One year it is the herring,

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another year it is the salmon, and another year the lobster, and yet, after volumes of complaints have been filed and long enquiries have been made, you find suddenly that the shell fish or other fish are pouring in again. Perhaps after some time we may be able to discover some of the laws which govern the migration of fish from one quarter to another. No doubt, if year after year fish are prevented from returning to their haunts for spawning purposes, they will not come to those grounds for some time, but it is very difficult to find the reasons for the extraordinary changes which take place in the migration of fish. I will read a quotation from one of the reports of the official overseers, written by a very efficient officer under the Minister :

"Overseer John Fitzgerald, of Mill Village, Queen's County, an officer of eighteen years' experience and an efficient and reliable one, writes of the Medway: 'There is, without doubt, an increase in salmon, alewives and trout during the past eight years. This is a matter of notoriety, and I have no hesitation in saying that sawdust is no impediment whatever to the ascent of fish of any kind. In rivers in which other mill rubbish, slats, edgings and bark are deposited, I firmly believe any decrease is due to the obstructions caused by these and the dams and not in the least degree by sawdust. Where sawdust is from any cause deposited on the spawning places and remains in such quantities as to cover up the gravel in which the ova are deposited, it might and probably would cause injury to the natural increase of the fish; but I know of no case of this kind, and can confidently assert that no sawdust was deposited on the spawning ground in the Medway. I have spoken with a score or more of persons, all of whom have spent their lives on the Medway River, some of them old men and all past middle life, and they are unanimous in the opinion that sawdust in the Medway causes no damage to fish of any kind, nor does it affect the spawning grounds in the least.'"

I think I will have the same consideration for the House and for other hon. gentlemen who may desire to speak as the Minister of Marine had. It might be interesting to me and to some few other gentlemen to continue these quotations, but it is only fair at this late hour that I should simply say that I could extend them for another hour if I thought fit to weary the members who are here. The point I make is this, authorities differ on this question and the facts seem strongly to show that the effect of sawdust itself, if the other rubbish to which I have referred is kept out of the river and the fish-ways are kept in good order, is not such as the gentlemen whose reports have been read to the House by the Minister of Marine would indicate. I trust the result of this motion and the return will be to bring the whole question before the House and the country for consideration. If any river in the Dominion is exempted, I think the La Have River should be exempted. I agree with the hon. the Minister that the power of exemption ought to be taken from the Administration, and I think he will acknowledge that I have carefully avoided making this a political issue. It ought not to be made a political issue, but should be settled on its own merits upon an intelligent and intelligible principle. I think the Ministry is placed frequently in an embarrassing position in consequence of the power given to them by the law, and I believe that either the law should be made uniform, permitting of no exemptions at all, or that, if any exemptions are permitted, a complete case has been made out in favour of the La Have River. In the first place the lumber interests are very extensive. Taking the men who work in the forests in the winter and