

APPENDIX No. 26.

SPECIAL REPORT ON RIVER OUELLE.

NEWCASTLE, ONT., October 14th, 1874.

Hon. A. J. SMITH,

Minister of Marine and Fisheries, &c., &c., &c.,
Ottawa.

SIR,—Having been instructed by your Department to visit River Ouelle for the purpose of ascertaining whether it could be adapted for the growth and production of salmon if re-stocked either by the natural or artificial methods of propagation, and having inspected the river I beg to report as follows :—

River Ouelle empties into the St. Lawrence on the south shore, about ninety miles below Quebec. Upon my arrival at the station of the Grand Trunk Railway, I proceeded to the village which bears the same name, situate about four miles northward from the station, just where the river enters the St. Lawrence. Following the river upwards from its confluence with the St. Lawrence, I made a close personal inspection of it for several miles in order that I might form a correct judgment of its nature and particulars. For some twelve or fourteen miles the river is extremely crooked, and flows in the most winding and circuitous manner through a very rich and fertile tract of land ; for nearly the whole of this distance the banks of the Ouelle are low and flat, extending on either side of the river a considerable distance. The land is cultivated by an industrious class of people, wholly of French origin. The crops consisted of hay, cereals and roots of various kinds, all of which had the appearance of yielding a very abundant harvest.

The tidal waters of the St. Lawrence flow up the Ouelle about four miles, but beyond this point and following the stream upwards some eight or ten miles, unless quieted by mill-dams stopping back the water, the river is rapid in its current, and for the most part runs over a gravelly and stony bed. Within the above distance there are a couple of grist mills, a carding mill and several saw mills, all driven by water-power from the river. The flouring mills are the first met with ; about ten or twelve miles up river, above them are the saw mills, the largest and most important one being that of the Messrs King, who are the principal manufacturers of sawed lumber on the river. Beyond these saw mills I was informed that no other artificial impediments, existed upon the river by which salmon or other fish were prevented from passing upwards into the interior of the country.

From information which I obtained from the most intelligent and reliable sources in the neighborhood, I learned that in former years salmon frequented the Ouelle River in large numbers, migrating up a long distance into the interior of the country, but of late the river had become quite depleted of fish, salmon being only known there as a thing of the past. The cause of the extermination of this former valuable product of the river I also found had been brought about in like manner as has been found to be the case in other parts of the country, by the erection of impassible barriers across the river, such as mill-dams, thereby preventing the salmon from reaching their spawning grounds, and by netting, spearing, and otherwise killing them in a barbarous manner during their breeding or spawning seasons. The two principal difficulties existing at present for the re-production of salmon in the Ouelle, are the mill-dam at the Messrs. King's mill, and the immense quantities of sawdust and mill rubbish constantly thrown into the stream. The first forms an impassible barrier for the ascent of fish beyond that point, and the second wholly forbids the possibility of salmon entering the river for spawning purposes. The noxious gases, and other deleterious substances created by the great