

The Ontario Bureau of Archives has therefore a useful place among the provincial institutions. It leaves the busy men to their work of nation-building, itself contributing by the collection of data. Its official duties are to gather records of local history and to winnow out from the mass what is really important. Ontario, the old Upper Canada of former days, has much material of this kind, and to know what it is worth will be a practical form of stock-taking.

The Great Lake Fisheries

THERE is one direction in which the United States has proved weaker in protective policy than Canada. The various states in the vicinity of the Great Lakes have recently refused legislation to protect the Lake fisheries, which are now in serious danger of depletion. The fishery laws of Ontario are very strict, but while Canadian fishermen have been restricted in their operations, the freest and most reckless methods have been followed on the southern shore, quite unchecked. The fish have no boundary line, and numerous American poachers are equally indifferent to it. As a result the herring catch on Lake Erie has fallen from 3,000,000 pounds in 1899 to 400,000 pounds in 1903. So apparent has been the annual falling-off that a joint commission was appointed not long ago to investigate. This commission agreed upon a basis of action, which was recommended to the various legislatures; but there it ended. The Ohio Legislature, controlling the south-shore fisheries of Lake Erie, refused to pass protective measures, evidently influenced by the fish trust, and the abuses will most likely continue as before.

It is as regrettable as it is strange that states which are in other respects so fully committed to the principle of protection should be so regardless of it in its simplest form. Their policy as concerns the Lake fisheries is a short-sighted one, and Canada shares directly in the loss thereby sustained. The fishery resources of the Great Lakes, if properly husbanded, are of great value, but Canada's careful regulations are vitiated by her neighbor's indifference.

Canada as a Literary Field

WHILE we have in Canada acres for the settler and scenery for the tourist, we have also almost unlimited material for the writer. There are few countries in the world which have greater literary resources, as yet very imperfectly developed, out of which a national literature might be produced. Few countries can furnish material both for factories and novelists, in such variety.

It is worth noting that many of the best books of travel, fiction, and nature-study, which have been published during the past ten years, have had their scenes laid in Canada, while the historical novels have for a much longer period drawn upon our Canadian history. At the present time the best work in the nature and out-of-door class, so popular of late, is being done by writers who have taken much of their inspiration from Canada. Various circumstances combine to give this prominence, such as a rich history, a wealth of incident, a wide scope of country, and varied phases of nature. The great Northland is a mine of material for both the explorer and the writer, and furnishes most fascinating reading. A well-known novelist said a few years ago, that there were enough incidents centering about our Canadian lakes, forests, prairies, and coasts to supply material for scores of writers, and that our literary resources were as rich as our industrial.

This being so, what prevents the more rapid production of a national literature? Chiefly two things—the lack of the writers and the lack of literary appreciation by the people. There have been not a few Canadian writers of the foremost talent and merit, but most of them have, sooner or later, removed to other countries where their work has been better rewarded. We have the material here, but it will not be put in book form until the public more warmly shows its appreciation of native genius and Canadian themes. While we wait for the men who are to write the books of the future, let us cultivate the habit of appreciation.