

Association, which I am told, is one of the tentacles of the great American octopus, the fish combine, and this list quoted our whitefish at 8 cents per pound wholesale, and our sturgeon at from 9 to 14 cents, while fine dressed trout taken from eastern waters was only quoted at 5½ cents.

Now, I want to give you the reports of two of his officers on the lakes:

1. Officer Magnusson of Arnes, on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg, reports a decrease in the catch of fish in his district, as compared with last season, and says that winter fishing was a failure. He reports close seasons and other regulations well observed in his district and closes his report as follows: 'In my opinion the lake will surely be depleted of fish in a few years if the companies are allowed to fish as at present.'

Angus McKay, one of the oldest men on Lake Winnipeg, a man who was in the employ of the late government for many years as Indian agent at Beren's river, makes this report:

2. Angus McKay, Esq., of Beren's river, late Indian agent at the point, has resided there for over twenty years, and has always taken a lively interest in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the community, and now writes stating that the lake is being rapidly depleted of both whitefish and sturgeon, and urges the government to pay heed to it before it is too late. I may add that this opinion is shared by all disinterested parties who have given this matter any consideration.

Mr. Coleclough also makes the following report to the deputy minister, which with your permission I will not read, but hand in, as I do not wish to take up the time of the House. After a lengthy report he says:

In conclusion permit me to say that I have given the matter of our fisheries considerable study, and consulted hundreds of settlers, and people who have no interests, other than the best interests of the province to serve, and all are of opinion that lake Winnipeg is being rapidly depleted of both whitefish and sturgeon and that even one more season's fishing such as last year, and a few preceding years, will be disastrous.

In verification of this let me state that the only whitefish now left in the lake are within from 20 to 25 miles of the most northerly parts. Last season over twelve hundred tons were taken under commercial licenses by the Dominion Fish Company, most of which were caught within 25 miles of the outlet of the lake. Then it must be borne in mind that all fish which pass over Sea Falls never return. The first mentioned fishing was done in the south portion of the lake near to the mouth of Red river, where whitefish were very plentiful, then they moved gradually northward to Swampy island. When these grounds were fished out, they then moved to Reindeer island where they fished so long as it was profitable, and then shifted to George's island, and later to Horse island, the most northerly island in the lake and all commercial fishing was carried on last season between this island and the north shore of the lake.

At this moment gangs of men are engaged building ice houses and making other extensive preparations on the northern shores of the lake in the vicinity of Warren's landing, and Playgreen lake, preparatory to operations there this winter and next summer, and as I said before, if fishing is permitted for another year on such a scale, it will prove a serious matter to the people of this province.

These reports prove conclusively that Mr. Coleclough saw eye to eye with Mr. Willmot, and did all that any man could do to save the fisheries of Lake Winnipeg, but the officials of the department and I fear the minister himself lent a deaf ear to his reports and recommendations; and after struggling for two years with the department to secure justice for the settlers of Lake Winnipeg, he gave up the fight in disgust, and resigned. The position was then filled by a man taken out of a hardware store in the town of Selkirk, a man who knew no more about fish than the average member of this House knows about watchmaking. I have no hesitation in saying that it was on the recommendation of the head of the fish combine in Selkirk, the president of the Dominion Fish Company, Captain William Robertson, that Mr. Young was appointed to that position. While a very estimable man, Mr. Young at that time was thoroughly ignorant of the fisheries. It is a very grave question whether he knew a whitefish from a tullibee, or a tullibee from a pickerel; but he was just the kind of a man who suited the great American fish interest. As he knew nothing about the fisheries, he could not see where these great companies were destroying the fisheries of Lake Winnipeg. Coming in right on the heels of Mr. Coleclough, a man who had years of experience in the fisheries, and who had resided at the headquarters of the fisheries at Selkirk, ever since they were started, Mr. Young made a report, and I wish to quote a passage of it to give you an idea of the position he took in this matter. His report to the Dominion Commission of Fisheries, Ottawa, is dated Selkirk, March 18, 1902, and in it he says:

As was foreshadowed in the preliminary statement published in last year's report, the returns show an increase in the quantity of fish caught and exported over the year 1900.

Whitefish have been very plentiful, so much so that some of the companies got all the fish required in about six weeks or two months fishing. I am pleased to report a yield of 1,364,000 pounds over the preceding year's, which goes to show that we have still an abundance of whitefish in our waters at any rate; I can say so with regard to the waters of Lake Winnipeg.

I just want to point out how easily a man may be misled. I do not believe that Mr. Young realized, when he made that report, how misleading it would be to the department. He states that there is abund-