

“cod and halibut fisheries have failed very largely within the last few years, owing first to the practice of trawl fishing, as this mode takes all the large seed fish at the bottom, and there are general complaints among the inhabitants from one end of the district to the other against this practice. The parties who follow this kind of fishing live in other parts of the Province. Gurry grounds established by law are not known in the district and nearly all the gurry has been thrown into the water for some years, and weirs are not provided with proper means of escape for small fish; these are some of the causes of a general failure of all kinds of fish in this section.

“Shad are caught about the head of the bay; these fish have failed some in quantity and largely in quality for some years, owing to the water being fouled by dead fish and gurry, added to this the nets used in their capture are one fifth less in the mesh of late years than formerly. Salmon were formerly plentiful in this section, but owing to the destruction practised on their spawning grounds they have become scarce of late years; yet with proper protection they may still be largely increased. Salmon visit the following rivers for the purpose of spawning viz: Maccan, Mill Village or Parsboro, Apple River, Dilligent River, Ramshead River and Fox River. The last four are entirely without protection.”

Overseer Patton has not sent me any report this year, but Warden Rindress writes that, “The catch of alewives is small this year in consequence of the fishing season being so late, the fishermen lifted their nets when the river was alive with alewives in order to attend to the summer herring fishing. The shad fisheries were not any better than last year as to quantity, while the quality is very much inferior. Salmon are quite plentiful in the rivers in this county, and it is hoped that in two or three years more they will be even abundant.”

*Colchester County.*—William Blair, Esq., Overseer for South Colchester, reports as follows:—“The salmon are increasing very rapidly in all the rivers in this district and are a great temptation to poachers. I have not succeeded in imposing any fines this season. I have some three or four cases under consideration, but as yet have not succeeded in getting sufficient proof to convict the offenders. The gaspereaux fisheries in Shubenacadie River are a total failure on account of the locks that have been constructed between the lakes for canal purposes, which prevent the fish from getting up to their original spawning grounds. These locks are in Halifax County. The salmon fishermen of the bay are making money rapidly; this fishing continues after the shad fishing is over. Although some parties are determined to evade the law, yet I know good is being done and much can be done yet.”

James W. Davison, Overseer of the Northern district, reports as follows:—“The district over which I have been appointed extends a distance of forty miles along the north coast of the Cobequid Bay, where the tide ebbs and flows, in some places, two miles from high to low water, leaving that distance a bare flat at low water. There are a number of rivers emptying into this bay, seven of which are frequented by salmon. The principal of these are the Portauquique, Economy, and Folly Rivers. The principal fishery is that of shad, which is followed all along the coast during the fishing season; it is carried on by means of brush weirs, which are set on the coast at low tide, at an average of three quarters of a mile from high water. There are thirty-five of these weirs in my district, the average length being five hundred and twenty-seven fathoms. Boats with drift nets are also largely employed, in which quite an amount of property is invested. There are ninety-one boats, each having about three hundred and fifty fathoms of net. The length of the season in which the boats are usually engaged is about two months; the season for weirs is longer, lasting about four months, but they require attention only at low tide. I am sorry to have to report a falling off in this fishery this season, which is attributed to adverse winds. The cod taken in this district are caught early in the spring, and are entirely for home consumption. Shad and salmon are chiefly exported to the United States.

I have endeavored to have suitable gates put in the weirs, and have to a great extent succeeded. Next season I hope to have this done to my entire satisfaction. The rivers