

of a horse or mule, and another sack containing a stone about as heavy as the grain on the other side as a means of balancing it, the idea of balancing grain with grain never having crossed their benighted minds. The Hoosiers of Indiana in early times got the credit of a peculiar style of weighing hogs, which was to fasten the porker to one end of a fence rail, a stone to the other end, balance the arrangement across a fence, and change stones until an equal balance was secured, after which they guessed the weight of the stone. Stupid as these mythical appliances of early pioneers may seem, they are not more so than what is accomplished by the postal official, who ignores the existence of eighty miles of railway, and sends mails to points along the same, over rough and imperfectly graded roads, behind a team of spavined horses or ring-boned mules.

To get at the official, who is directly responsible for such stupidity as above described, would be a hopeless task. But there is such a thing as finding an official who is not responsible or to blame in the matter. Such an one we have in the Inspector of Post Offices for the Northwest. By some unaccountable Ottawa blunder we have in this position one of the most efficient officers in the civil service of Canada. This same official could grasp and handle the whole difficulties of his position during last year's rebellion, and secured to the citizen soldiers at the front a mail service, almost as regular as that of the towns of Manitoba. Such an official is not responsible for the stupidity in connection with Southern Manitoba. We know that long ago he has faithfully represented the case in its proper light to his so called superiors at Ottawa, and at that head-quarters of official blundering we lay all blame. We hold that the head of the Post Office Department is directly responsible, and this and other pieces of blundering under his control, prove that he is either incompetent or wilfully tardy. It may be that the latter is the case, and that some piece of political "thimble rigging" or "pick at the loop" requires that these contracts for carrying mails by stage be kept in force until after the next Dominion election. If such is the case we would advise the people of Southern Manitoba to handle their own mail service by appointing a special messenger on the trains. The experiment would be a paying one we believe.

THE CLOSE FISH SEASON.

The new order in council which has changed the close season for white fish in our Northwestern lakes, seems to be condemned by all in this country, who are possessed of the knowledge and experience necessary to frame a reliable opinion upon the subject, and has raised a storm of indignation such as has seldom if ever followed any action in our affairs taken at Ottawa, and the mystery to all such informed people is, how could the Minister of Marine and Fisheries be persuaded to sanction such an order?

For several years there has been a fear both here and in Ottawa, that some abuse would crop up, which would have the effect of permanently injuring if not destroying our fisheries; and as these are considered second in importance only to our agricultural resources, the fear was a commendable feeling. It has prompted several pieces of protective legislation, and as the fisheries develop more of these will be necessary.

It has been generally accepted here that somewhere between the beginning of October and the middle of November the white fish in our lakes spawned. The time of spawning seldom exceeded fifteen days, but it varied according to time and season. The dates named were supposed to cover the outside limit under any circumstance. This limit was specially favorable for some hundreds of people around the lakes who lived mainly by the fishing, as it came in at a time between summer fishing and winter fishing on the ice, and has gathered around the lake quite a population of industrious people composed largely of Icelandic settlers, who were quite an element in the development of our resources. But the new Order in Council changes the close season to the rather lengthy period between the middle of November and the first of February, which it is easy to see will effectually shut off the winter fishing operations of the people we refer to, and will leave hundreds of families without a means of subsistence during the biting months of winter.

If there was no argument against this new arrangement but that of humanity, we cannot see how any Minister could refuse to have it rescinded. But the argu-

ment of protection is equally strong, and from facts gathered during the past few weeks from all points on the lakes, it is clear that if the netting of fish is permitted during the whole month of October, the most wanton slaughter will ensue, and a few years will clean our lakes of white fish and other species which subsist upon the white fish. There are men here who remember similar work before the days of a close season, when five canoes landed in a single day some ten thousand fish, all or nearly all in a spawning condition. It is needless to say that we do not wish to see a repetition of such wanton slaughter, and we question if an Order in Council or even an Act of Parliament will protect those who dare to engage in it.

It is the easiest thing in the world for a Dominion Minister to get misinformed in a question of this kind, there are so many parasites and interested barnacles in Ottawa misrepresenting affairs in the Northwest to him. Minister Foster can easily get properly informed in this matter when he returns from his trip to British Columbia, and once he does, we do not fear but he will take prompt steps to get the mistake rectified.

But there should be care taken not to allow this agitation to carry matters to a foolish extreme. There are those who wish to make the present a time to urge the prohibition of the export of white fish, a step which would so lessen the demand, as to make the employment of the hundreds of poor people engaged in the fishing unprofitable. We hope Minister Foster will not be misled into this foolish step, for we know he will be pressed on the matter.

Some time ago we had occasion to refer to a class in this province, who wish to import the European vagary of valuing pheasants higher than peasants. "Sportsmen" such people ostentatiously dub themselves, and assume that the interests of those engaged in fisheries and those of trade must be made subservient, to or for that matter trampled on to suit their whims. This country develops too many practical ideas, to admit of such nonsense, and when industry and trade are served sport will be attended to. There is not the slightest reason from a protective point for any such prohibition, and all it would do, would be to pamper a class which embraces more worthless loafers, than any other in the Northwest.