

a single instance in which the full penalty was exacted. This, he thought, arose from a vague opinion entertained by them that the law was defective. I could not learn the origin of this opinion, which, however, Mr. Parker did not share. He considered the law amply sufficient to meet the cases reported, and he blamed the Magistrates, for not doing their duty in enforcing its provisions. This indisposition, on the part of the Magistrates, I found to be common wherever I went, and I imagine it arises from the laxity which has hitherto prevailed throughout the whole Province on the subject of the protection of the Fisheries, and until this protection is assumed by Government, there is little hope of the regulations being enforced, as, from local causes, neither Wardens nor Magistrates are willing to act with vigor. Mr. Parker's district is so extended that he finds it extremely difficult to detect nets illegally set, for as soon as he starts on a tour of inspection, word is passed from neighbor to neighbor, and the illegally set nets are all taken up before his arrival at their localities. The district from Indiantown is much too extended for a single Warden, and as there is so much illegal fishing in its whole extent, there ought to be at least two more officers to protect it.

Between Indiantown and Beaubear's, Island there were evidences of a number of nets having been set, but as they were all up at the time, I am unable to say whether they infringed the Regulations.

At Chatham I had an interview with Peter Miller, Esq., who having entered upon the duty assigned him, had already visited the North-west Branch, and had proceeded thence to the mouth of the river, which obviated the necessity of any further examination of it on my part.

From all with whom I conversed, and from every one to whom I pointed out the consequences of illegal fishing, I met with the greatest civility. All admitted the evils which existed on the river, and most all expressed a strong wish to see them removed. In one instance I met a man and a youth going up the river with all the implements of spearing. On questioning him he admitted that he intended to spear that night. I cautioned him against this breach of the law, but he said that laws were of no use if those who made them were the first to break them. He complained bitterly of Mr. Fletcher, who had, he asserted, destroyed more fish in one season than he himself had in five years; and he thought it too bad that he should be deprived of taking a fish that his family needed, while a stranger might kill hundreds uselessly and unnecessarily. He said they might prosecute him if they chose, but he would spear notwithstanding. I explained to him the object that Mr. Fletcher had, and that if he had done wrongly, care should be taken that no repetition of his practice should be permitted. The man seemed appeased, to my great satisfaction he did not spear that night, although I have little doubt he did so as soon as I left that part of the river. The settlers all regretted the yearly decrease in the number of fish, and seemed anxious that measures should be taken to restore the river to its former state. Every one I met expressed his readiness to comply with the laws, if his neighbor would do so too. Those who resided on the upper part of the river, threw all the blame upon those below, for not allowing the fish to get up, while those below attributed the falling off to the destruction of fish on the spawning grounds. The truth is, that while all pretend to regret illegal fishing, all persist in practising it, and are doing everything in their power to perpetuate the very evils they deplore, and if the Fishery Laws are not vigorously enforced, it will be necessary, in order to prevent the total depopulation of the river, to prohibit fishing on it entirely.

In view of the present state of this river, and of the rapid rate at which salmon are decreasing, I think that fishing should cease on all parts of the river on the 15th August. At present, above Beaubear's Island, on both branches, netting is legal till the 31st, and in consequence of some improper permission given by a former Warden, it is permitted till the 10th of September, in manifest violation of the law, and to the great injury of the river.

I regret that I found it utterly impossible to get any reliable statistical information. There appeared a manifest disinclination on the part of all to state the number of fish they had taken during the season, and in several cases I have reason to believe that I was purposely misinformed; the number taken being largely in excess of the number stated, but all accounts agreed in the great decrease of fish during the last ten years.