

upon before the next Session of Parliament, and in doing so I shall confine myself to the simple questions of preserving and increasing the existing food supply of the North-West and Manitoba.

First.—The fishes of these regions.

The alarming decrease of the number of fish caught at many of the well-known fishing grounds, as, for instance, the chain of the Qu'Appelle Lakes, the mouth of the Saskatchewan, and that of the Red River and the head of Lake Winnipeg. (This latter point very much so indeed), and I am informed that in addition to the increasing local consumption immense quantities are shipped to St. Paul, Chicago, and even as far east as Detroit. One informant says that the Indian of these parts, with his simple gill net, finds few fish which escape the immense seines used by the fish exporters, and that there are other appliances in use equally destructive to river fish. Another informant states that he knew of fifty car loads of frozen fish being shipped in a comparatively short time, and this information if correct, points to the speedy denudation of these waters without speedy action is taken. The diminution in the fish supply of the Qu'Appelle and other prairie lakes and streams of course arises partly from the fact that the disappearance of the buffalo has caused a greater strain on their powers of production, while the brackish lakes further west and south have ceased to produce fish, probably from their entire destruction in seasons of very great drouth rendering the waters much more than usually alkaline.

These facts, to my mind, point to the great necessity which exists for a fish-breeding establishment at once to furnish spawns of the more desirable varieties of fish and for that of the white and yellow pickerel which, alone, so far as I know, will live and multiply in brackish water.

I am aware that there exists a very general belief that many of the south-western lakes are unfit for fish life, but I am satisfied that in ordinary seasons this belief is an error, for large numbers of these fish are caught in Devil's Lake in Dakota, not far south of the boundary line, the water of which is too alkaline to be used by oxen, horses or by men.

Secondly,—Regarding the value of wild rice as an existing food, I have already quoted His Grace Archbishop Tache, and I have corroborative testimony from Venerable Archdeacon Cowley and others. I have also the concurrent evidence of Honorable Walter R. Bown, a member of the first North-West Council, who is familiar with the wild rice producing portion of Keewayten and Manitoba having travelled extensively and lived several winters where this plant abounds. He informs me that fish and wild rice constituted almost the only rations of his six men, and that

upon this food they were healthy and vigorous, and he himself upon the same diet was able to undergo the greatest physical exertion and I have no hesitation in urging that when the rice reaches its full maturity, this fall, a quantity should be procured and its effectual seeding may be accomplished by simply dropping it in all waters west of the Red River, where the condition (which I have already mentioned) exist for its successful growth.

Thirdly,—the experiment of introducing the rabbit into districts of the North-West where they have been exterminated, is best done during the summer, and if due precaution is observed in the choice of the places for its introduction, no harm will come of it. I am aware that the introduction of the rabbit into Australia has been an unfortunate experiment, but Honorable Walter R. Bown, who has travelled extensively in that country, as he has also in our North-West, informs me that the difficulty arose in Australia from the fact that the English rabbit burrows while our variety of these animals makes his home in above ground retreats, and that while the Australian Rabbit breeds all the year round ours cease doing so, during the winter months.

These facts shew that there would be little danger of the rabbit becoming a nuisance in the North-West, while the possible advantages of this additional food supply are very great indeed.

I have endeavored in making these suggestions to confine myself to such as would entail very little expense in proportion to the possible benefits, and at the risk of seeming to depart somewhat from the subject under consideration. I may add that when I went to the North-West, a quarter of a century ago, buffalo meat, preserved in the form of pemican, was the staple food of the inland districts—the buffalo, in fact, supplying not only the Indians of the district wherein he ranged, but far north and east in the fish-producing districts. These conditions no longer exist, and may now to a large extent be reversed in the feeding of the plain Indians with fish caught by the fishing Indians, instead of the bacon imported from great distances, and which too often becomes, from necessary exposure, unfit for food.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your humble servant,

JOHN SCHULTZ.

I regret to say that I have had but little opportunity since I wrote this letter a year ago of increasing my knowledge of the subjects of which it treats. I had indeed intended, during the past summer, to visit many points in the North-West, but illness intervened. Honorable gentlemen must not suppose from my only remarking upon three of the natural