

## Ontario Fishery Commission.

ture fish. The average weight of whitefish now is pretty small. They will average 2 pounds, formerly they were  $2\frac{3}{4}$ . Some obey the law and some do not, it is a one-sided affair.

### (K.)—MEAFORD.

*John McCrae*, Meaford, fisherman (page 186):—A 2 pound whitefish is not a mature fish. Overfishing has destroyed the fisheries on the south shore of the Georgian Bay. We got whitefish thick up to 2,200 fish with one gang of nets and a single boat. Whitefish are now a thing of the past on this shore. Whitefish are the most profitable fish if they could be caught; they are gone on the south shore, and greatly reduced in the Georgian Bay by overfishing; small meshes have also reduced their size.

*Gilbert Peter McIntosh*, fish-dealer, Meaford, late president of the Fishermen's Association (page 172) says:—He has carried on a whitefish and trout fishery; says a  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh is too small for gill-nets in these waters; that a 5-inch mesh should be the minimum; the  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh has been the means of reducing the fishing. There are too many small immature fish caught; the autumn mesh should be  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Is positive that nothing less than 5-inch mesh is proper for whitefish and salmon-trout. Fish now caught are immature and unable to breed. As a dealer, has seen small immature whitefish and trout on the market; has handled them; they come from different localities; small trout are more numerous on the south shore than on the north; some shipments average from  $\frac{3}{4}$  pounds to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds; quite small fish. Formerly we could not dispose of such fish, but we can do so now. Considers it injurious to the fisheries to catch these small fish. The mesh in the pots of the pound-nets is too small, and should be regulated like the gill-nets. A  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -pound salmon-trout is immature, and should not be caught, and a fish at  $1\frac{3}{4}$  pounds is a pretty small fish. The whitefish are the most valuable of the two. Has seen one boat take 2,000 whitefish in one lift; that would be an ordinary catch right in front of Meaford. In the last eight years the whitefish seem to have disappeared; there are but few left. If there is a close season, it should be enforced. A good many people along the shore break the law and fish in the close season. The black trout or fall trout, the species that come in to spawn, are as plentiful as ever, but the summer trout have fallen off one-half in 20 years, and the size of the fish reduced by using too small a mesh.

*James Pilgrim*, fisherman, Meaford (page 167):—Whitefish have left here; they don't come here; they have just disappeared; formerly one gang of nets would take 500, 1,000 to 1,500 at once with one gang of nets, usually from 20th November to 10th December.

*Adam H. Stephen*, druggist, Meaford (page 176):—We used to catch great numbers of whitefish off the shore here when I was fishing in what is called the Mudhole, about eight miles off Meaford—about the end of November—it was either a spawning or a feeding ground—this was eight years ago. Has taken 1,500 out of one gill-net; other fishermen did the same. They were full of spawn; they all left at once, and for a number of years have not fished it. The uniform mesh should now be 5 inches.

*John Nelson*, fisherman, Meaford (page 178) says:—The fishermen follow the whitefish to the north shore in October. The finest and largest whitefish and salmon-trout go there to spawn and they are not caught at any other time there. They are right on shore on their spawning grounds, 1st of November. "I have seen forty boats of us within three miles." This is general with other fishermen. It is the only time you can catch these large spawning fish. The boats come from all parts of the country there, from Manitoulin Island, and all parts of the Georgian Bay. Half-breeds and Indians all congregate there to catch these spawning fish. The fishermen follow the fish down from the north shore of the Manitoulin, and at this time the spawn is running freely from the fish.