

# Salmon Fishing on the Miramichi River New Brunswick

by CONSTABLE L. B. MATCHETT

**S**ALMON FISHING on the Miramichi River and Bay is one of the main industries of the Province, besides being one of the chief attractions for sportsmen who come to New Brunswick.

Miramichi Bay is situated on the North East coast of New Brunswick, the greater proportion of operations being conducted through the medium of fishing boats. These boats are owned and operated by resident fishermen who reside in the districts of Neguac, Tabusintac, Escuminac, Bay St. Anne and Loggieville, many of them being supplied with nets by the W. S. Loggie Company, Limited, and the A. R. Loggie Company, Limited, of Loggieville and Chatham. In return for the use of these nets, the companies take fish from the fishermen on an exchange basis.

The fishermen, so far as this form of fishing is concerned, are called "drifters". They sail out to sea about one hour before sundown, put their nets out and drift all night with the tide, taking the nets up in the very early morning and subsequently coming to shore with the catch, which is then hauled by truck to Loggieville and Chatham, placed in freezers and eventually shipped to all parts of the world, the salmon from this area being of very high quality.

Incidentally, a few years ago one of the chief methods used in smuggling liquor into New Brunswick was by means of persons associating themselves with the fishing fleet. Boats containing such individuals, who would ostensibly be fishing in the locality at night, would make contact with a rum runner lying in Northumberland Strait and would bring tins of alcohol or kegs of rum ashore. There were so many boats employed in fishing that it was very difficult to discover which were actually engaged in smuggling. A small amount of liquor would be brought in at one time, the minor quantity of such cargo carried making it a great deal easier to dispose of than would be the case if transported in bulk. Many of the offenders, however, were caught and their boats and gear confiscated, a heavy fine or imprisonment also being inflicted. This action resulted in the activities of liquor smugglers being curtailed to a considerable extent.

The duties of a Fisheries Officer in the Miramichi section are varied. Patrols in many cases are made by boat, this being necessary on account of the fact that fishermen can only operate to a certain line which extends from Neguac Beach to Escuminac, a distance of approximately twenty miles. A constant patrol is, therefore, necessary at night to see that this line is not crossed. The Bay, which eventually forms the entrance to the Miramichi River, narrows quite rapidly at this point and if fishing was to be allowed beyond the designated line, very few salmon would ever travel up the river to the spawning grounds.

Fishing boats, as a general rule, are equipped with almost a mile of net and are usually manned by three men, the net being of the straight variety of five inch mesh and with "floaters" attached to the surface line. Lead