

northward, and means of communication with the north country are opened up, the fishing industry will be developed, so that in time a

#### GREAT FISHING INTEREST

will be built up in this portion of Canada. Hudson bay itself and the rivers emptying into it, will undoubtedly afford employment for thousands of men in the fisheries which will be established there after communication by railway is established with the bay. The construction of a railway to Hudson bay will, it is confidently hoped, be carried out within a very few years.

Manitoba and the vast region to the north and northwest of the province, is undoubtedly better off in the matter of fish supply, than any other interior portion of the continent. Indeed, the country bordering on the lakes of the St. Lawrence water system, can hardly compare with the portions of western and northwestern Canada referred to, in the matter of quantity and quality of the fish supply. The waters of the northern lakes are clear and cold, and the fish found therein are of the best quality. The whitefish, which is so abundant in the larger Manitoba lakes, particularly in Lake Winnipeg, and which is also found in many of the lakes to the north, is undoubtedly the king of fresh water food fishes. In Hudson bay salmon, cod, herring, halibut and many other well-known varieties of salt water fish are abundant. There are also whale, walrus, seals, etc., in the bay. It is well known that fish taken in northern waters are of better quality than the same varieties in more southern latitudes.

#### A BIG INDUSTRY.

Take a map of North America and examine it for a moment with us. The vast central region of the continent, south and southwest of Manitoba, it will be seen is without lakes, and is therefore without any home supply of fish. The fish consumed throughout this region have to be brought from the sea coasts east and west, or from the St. Lawrence lakes. Now look north, and observe what a difference. There is lake after lake, large and small, the larger ones comparing in size with lakes Erie and Ontario, of the St. Lawrence system. The populated territory to the south of Manitoba should afford an abundant market for our fish, as they have no supply of their own. At present the duty on fish going into the United States, makes an obstacle in the way of shipping fish in that direction, though these duties are not prohibitory in their nature. It is only reasonable to suppose, however, that these duties will be abolished in time. With the market opened for us to the south, and communication opened to the north, we estimate that 10,000 to 15,000 persons could find permanent employment, prosecuting fishing in the waters of Manitoba and the territory to the north and north-west. This would be exclusive of Hudson bay which would afford employment for many thousands of men, say easily 15,000 persons. These figures may seem large at a glance, but in the light of comparison it will be seen that they are not excessive. Lake Erie, which is fifty square miles smaller than Lake Winnipeg, gives employment to about 5,000 persons in the fishing industry on the lake. Lake Erie has been fished for 100 years, while our Manitoba and northern lakes are practically untouched. There

is every reason to believe that Lake Winnipeg, and many of our other lakes, are just as valuable from the fisherman's standpoint, in proportion to size, as Lake Erie. By this comparison, it will be seen that 15,000 men is not an excessive estimate for our Manitoba and northern lakes, and we believe that approximately this number could engage in our fisheries, without unduly depleting the lakes of fish. From 15,000 to 20,000 men would certainly not be an excessive estimate for Hudson bay—a vast inland ocean, over 1,000 miles from north to south, and 600 to 800 miles from east to west.

The fisheries of Hudson bay and the inland lakes and rivers of Manitoba and the region to the north and west should therefore easily support a population of 160,000 persons, including the fishermen and their families if they were opened up and developed to a reasonable extent. These fisheries if opened up, would be as convenient to the centres of population in the States to the south as the Atlantic and Pacific coast now are, and population is rapidly increasing in this direction.

#### THE ANNUAL CATCH.

As previously stated, very little has yet been done toward developing the fishing industry in the Manitoba and northern lakes. What has been done has been altogether in the Manitoba lakes and principally in Lake Winnipeg. For the past few years some fishing as a commercial industry has been done on Lake Winnipeg, and there are now three companies operating on this lake during the summer season. These companies employ three steam tugs, twenty-five sail boats, and about 190 white men and 200 Indians. For the season of 1890, these three companies caught 1,924,224 pounds of fish, valued at \$92,255, of which 1,735,492 were whitefish. The catch for 1891 has not been officially stated yet, but it will be somewhat larger than for 1890. The fish caught by the companies are sold to the local trade and exported to the United States. The companies have freezers erected at points on the lake, where the fish are stored and thence shipped at convenient seasons. The mode of fishing has been mostly with gill nets.

In addition to the three large companies mentioned, there are quite a number of independent fishermen who operate on a smaller scale, and who sell the fish to the companies, or to traders who visit the lakes to buy them. These smaller fishermen operate in Lake Winnipeg and also in Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis. While the three fishing companies mentioned operate only in the summer, the independent fishermen operate principally in the winter season. They cut holes in the ice through which to place their gill nets in position, and in this way they take a considerable number of fish during the winter. The total catch of fish in the year 1890, including the summer and winter catch by the companies and local fishermen, was 5,967,271 pounds, valued at \$232,104. These fish were nearly all taken in the Manitoba lakes, but a few thousand pounds were caught in the Qu'Appelle lakes, west of Manitoba, which are included in the Manitoba official fishery district. No account is taken of fish caught for local use by Indians and others in the unorganized territory north and west of Manitoba. Of the total

catch given above, for 1890, about 2,056,000 pounds were exported to the States.

#### OFFICIAL INTERFERENCE.

The federal government of Canada, which controls the fishery interests in all parts of the country, has lately shown some disposition to curtail fishing in Manitoba waters. Regulations recently issued have a tendency to restrict rather than encourage the development of the fishing industry. The fishery department seems to fear that if commercial fishing for export is carried on to any large extent, the Indians will be deprived of the fish which form an important source of their food supply, through the depletion of the fisheries. This is altogether a groundless fear. The number of Indians depending upon the fish is very small in comparison with the extent of the sources of supply. Outside of Lake Winnipeg, the waters of Manitoba and the west are practically untouched yet, and even in Lake Winnipeg a much larger catch could be made annually in this lake, without any danger of depleting the supply. There is every reason to believe that Lake Winnipeg is as valuable a lake for fishing purposes as Lake Erie, while the catch in the latter lake is about ten times greater than in Lake Winnipeg. The fishing industry in Lake Winnipeg and our other waters should therefore be encouraged instead of being restricted.

#### VARIETIES OF FISH.

First in value and importance is the whitefish, already mentioned. This fish is very abundant in Lake Winnipeg, and is also found in many of the other lakes. It is a rich, juicy fish, weighing from three to twelve pounds, while occasionally fish of this species of even above twelve pounds' weight are taken. It is a very prolific fish, and will therefore permit of a large catch without fear of depleting the supply. Lake trout is perhaps the next most valuable fish. This variety is not so plentiful in Lake Winnipeg as in some of the more northern lakes. It delights in clear, cold water. It belongs to the salmon family and attains large size, frequently weighing from twenty to thirty pounds. Pickerel, or dore, is another variety common in Manitoba and northern lakes and rivers. Pike is a very common fish in nearly all Manitoba waters. It is specially abundant in several of the smaller lakes and streams, but is also abundant in the large lakes. It is not as fine a food fish as those previously named, but is nevertheless valued by those who cannot readily secure the more luscious varieties. A fish called the tullibee may be termed the herring of the Manitoba lakes. It resembles the herring of the St. Lawrence lakes in form and flavor, but is in every sense a superior fish to the latter, being larger, more free from the annoying small bones of the herring family and fatter and richer in flavor. Like the herring, it is a very prolific fish. The gold eye is another fish which resembles the herring somewhat, and which is plentiful in Manitoba and northern waters. The sturgeon is the largest fish which inhabits Manitoba waters. Fish of this variety weighing over 200 pounds have been caught. They are a rich, oily fish, and are a little strong for delicate stomachs, but when carefully prepared for the table by par-boiling are very delicious. There are a number of other varieties