

understand how impossible it was for the provincial settlers to get the ear of the department or of the minister. This is a regrettable fact but I think it has had considerable to do with the destruction of the fishery. I am speaking now of what I know. In 1893, when these settlers had exhausted every resource that they could command to obtain justice from the Department of Marine and Fisheries, being well acquainted along the shores of that lake and being in business myself, not in the fish business, seeing the destructive methods that were practised by the American interests and the great destruction that had taken place in our fisheries, I came to Ottawa and took the matter up with the then minister, Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper. I became interested in the matter largely because of the fact that the American fish interests, not satisfied with controlling our fisheries and taking fish out of our lake to the extent of millions of pounds illegally, were endeavouring to crush out of existence the two small Canadian companies that were then operating on the lake. This was their *modus operandi*: there was a duty of a quarter cent a pound on all fish imported into the United States from Canada, but a clause in the United States Customs Act provided that any fish taken in Canada in nets owned by American citizens would be admitted into the United States free. The Booth Fish Packing Company of Chicago, that great octopus which fastened its tentacles on every fish producing sheet of water in Canada, received the advantage of this provision of the United States customs law as it owned the nets and plant of the Robinson Company of that time and when the fish of the two Canadian companies got to the border line it was met with the duty and handicapped to that extent in the Chicago market. In this way the Americans were able to dictate prices and terms to the Canadians. The result was that in 1899 they succeeded, with their control of the Chicago market in crushing the two Canadian companies out of existence. In that year the Selkirk Fish Company and the Reid and Tait Company sold their business to the Booth Fish Packing Company, or as it was called in this country the Dominion Fish Company, but it was Canadian in name only, the stock being almost exclusively owned by the Booth Fish Packing Company of Chicago. Since that time the Booth Fish Packing Company of Chicago have practically controlled the fishing in Lake Winnipeg. Right under the eyes of the officers of the government they have taken from 1,200 to 1,500 tons of fish annually out of this lake, although it was pointed out in 1890 that if they were allowed to continue taking out two and a

quarter millions of pounds of fish annually the lake would soon be depleted. In 1898 through the efforts of some very prominent Liberals in Manitoba who knew something of the conditions that prevailed on Lake Winnipeg and who had fought side by side with myself and others in trying to prevent the destruction of this lake, sufficient pressure was brought to bear on the present government to remove the then inspector Latouche Tupper. In his place the government appointed a man from whom everybody expected great things in the person of Mr. F. W. Coleclough, an old resident of the town of Selkirk, a man who had been engaged in the fish business himself and who knew every bay and every inlet, on the lake, and every settler on its shores. When Mr. Coleclough assumed office we expected that the American Fish Company would receive a check, but we failed to realize the power of this great combine. Within less than two years this man who tried to do his duty by the country and by the settlers was practically forced out of office. Every recommendation he made to the department at Ottawa in the way of restricting the American fishing interests from killing the fish, was either ignored or side tracked so that he failed entirely to make any improvement in the conditions. Mr. Coleclough was not only a prominent citizen but he was a prominent Liberal; he had represented a Manitoba constituency in the local legislature for many years and the settlers along the lake had great hopes that he would see justice done to them. Now, in order to prove that Mr. Coleclough was true to the people and true to his trust, and that he saw eye to eye with Mr. Wilmot, who realized that these great American fish interests were destroying Lake Winnipeg, I shall read some strong representations to this government contained in a report of Mr. Coleclough made on January 15, 1900:

Selkirk, January 15, 1900.

Hon. Sir Louis Davies, K.C.M.G.,

Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

Sir,—I have the honour to report as follows on the fisheries of Manitoba, for the year 1899, and to enclose herewith statistical returns for the same period.

This season in the matter of catch and all other respects, may be said to have been an average one, some lakes showing an increase in output, and others a proportionate decrease.

The fish companies continue to move their plants northward, and this year their operations were carried on within a short distance of the northern shores of the lake, and I understand they contemplate another move to Norway House and Playgreen Point on the northern coast. To my mind this is *prima facie* evidence of the depletion of these waters. Fully 90 per cent of the catch of all our lakes goes to the United States and finds a market there at good prices. Last spring I had a wholesale price list from the Detroit Fish