

## Ontario Fishery Commission.

amount of flesh-forming material present in fish and in a form which entails little labour on the digestive organs—for most persons certainly less than meat—and the facility with which fish may be associated with other elements, place it in the front rank of foods in that mixed dietary which is suitable to those who lead more or less the kind of life referred to.”

That the danger line of destruction of the fisheries of the great lakes is being approached with lesser areas is not generally known to the public. Lake after lake becomes depleted of its best fish, but railway extension opens the other inland waters, limited in number and easily exhausted. The supply of fish is for the present only barely maintained, but at increased cost to the consumer. Whether the lakes and waters already depleted can ever be replenished remains to be proved; the process of destruction and the methods to accomplish it are clear. Should the present very exhaustive methods not be prohibited in all matters, all the better qualities of fish must soon become only a present luxury for the rich, and ere long be exterminated.

Hatcheries can assist nature in replenishing depleted waters, but all artificial efforts will be futile where waste, excessive fishing, and a defiance of all nature's laws have a foothold.

### 3.—THE DEPLETION OF THE LAKE AND OTHER FISHERIES.

In pursuing the following synopsis of the evidence given it will be observed, that the whitefish being the favourite fish with the public, and the fish most easily caught by the fishermen, were the first to be exhausted. Mr. McDonald, who represented the Buffalo wholesale fish dealers at the Detroit conference said: “I think the whitefish are all out of Lake Erie, it is the herring we are all after now.”

The evidence given in relation to Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay shows a rapid advance to a similar condition in those waters. In Lake Huron the whitefish are admitted to be “pretty well caught out,” and at the lower end of the lake both whitefish and trout are at the point of extinction. Where an increase in the catch of salmon-trout is shown it is explained by the mesh being reduced from 5 inches to  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , and in many cases much less to catch the smaller and immature fish, as well as by improved fishing gear, more capital and greater efforts put forth by increased numbers of fishermen. Twenty years ago it is said in evidence that a small schooner would have been required, rather than a small fishing boat, to carry off a fisherman's catch from Squaw Island at the head of the Georgian Bay.

The large salmon-trout (large blacktrout so-called), which come from the deep water of the Georgian Bay to the shores about the 15th to 20th October to spawn, are followed by fishermen handling over 1,000 miles in length of gill-nets. It is possible, under the present plan of fishing the Georgian Bay and contiguous waters, to exterminate those fish in a season. The spawning grounds are in circumscribed space on bars, reefs and shallows, and there the fishermen congregate in the autumn months. This immense length of twine can be laid, making a wall of nets, so as not only to catch, but to prevent the fish which escape from reaching their spawning grounds to reproduce their species. The fish being thus driven from one part of the lake and bay to another, a correct conclusion as to the condition of the fisheries in Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay can only be arrived at by taking those waters as a