

Ontario Fishery Commission.

sending the logs to the United States does great harm to the working people, as the saw-mill owners have shut down, that stopping a great trade here; the Government should take early steps to stop this evil which is doing so much harm to the fisheries and the fishermen, and to the inhabitants generally; this is the general opinion amongst all fishermen and the public on the North Shore. (p. 107, pt. II.)

Nelson Couture, of Spanish River, a fisherman for 22 years, said:—Whitefish are more scarce than they were: the water has become dirty and their feeding grounds are injured from the bark and fibre wood ground off the logs that are rafted across the bay; these rafts will cover 10, 15 and 20 acres of water; they are towed about 1 mile an hour, all this time the logs work and rub together grinding off the bark, and sappy wood parts in great quantities which settles to the bottom-spoiling the feeding ground of the fish, and lodging in the meshes of the nets, destroying them. This log rafting has been going on for some 5 years, and is increasing every year very largely, and destroying the nets of a great number of fishermen; these logs come down all the rivers and are rafted and towed across to the United States. (p. 110, pt. II.)

James Glanville, of Sault Ste. Marie, fisherman for years, said:—Bark and the soft wood on the logs which has been found to be very plentiful in the water, since the exportation of saw-logs has taken place, is injurious; this stuff rubs off by the motion of the logs while being towed across the bay to the United States. The rafts are very large and great damage is done to the meshes of the nets; it is much more injurious to gill-nets than pound-nets; if these logs are allowed to be towed over our waters this difficulty will increase, and the prospects for the fisheries in the future will not be very encouraging to the fishermen. (p. 127, pt II.)

P. Sullivan and Sons, of Spanish Station, write as follows:—In regard to the number of rafts which left here this summer of 1893, there was two hundred and ten million logs came down the Spanish River; out of that there were about 30,000,000 manufactured in this district, and there are still on hand about 20,000,000 rafted up in store-booms, to leave here the first thing in the spring; that leaves 160,000,000 which were rafted and towed to the other side (United States) this season; as near as can be ascertained these logs left here in about 40 or 45 rafts and would cover from 20 to 25 square miles of water.

The above facts have been ascertained respecting the number of logs passing between Spanish River and the Georgian Bay. There are eight different streams and each one is used for the towing of logs; the French River, I am told, passed even more logs than the Spanish, and my opinion is that the bottom of the whole lake from Georgian Bay to Missasagua is teeming with bark; it is 18 miles across to the Manitoulin, and rafts pass in three different directions, so that the bark is spread every way; this bark in the course of time forms into a kind of slime, and fish will not stay on that ground; there were five boats fishing from here four years ago, since then they have left as fish got so scarce, and in a very short time I believe there will be no fish at all.

On September 26 "last, I had 36 pieces of nets utterly destroyed by this bark, each piece of net was 180 yards long (in all 6,480 yards) and was loaded so heavily with bark as to break the web; I had also six other pieces similarly loaded with bark the last week in October. I am sending a sample of net as we took it out in October."

DEPLETION OF THE FISHERIES IN THE WATERS OF ONTARIO.

The general tendency of the testimony given by the fishermen themselves, and the information obtained from all other sources, clearly and unmistakably goes to show that rapid decline of the better classes of fishes is being experienced in all of the former extensive fisheries in the lakes; and in some localities almost an extermination of the former prosperous commercial traffic in the fishing industries of the country has been already reached. The causes of this decline were so evident and so convincing to the minds of the Commissioners from the investigations made by them that they embodied their views in the concluding paragraphs of their report as follows:—