

speaks of the effect of sawdust upon salmon, saying :

"I think that I can prove conclusively that sawdust is innocuous to trout and salmon. I have fished mercilessly all my life a charming little river not ten miles from Halifax. Some ten years ago a sawmill was erected on this stream, after an interval of fifteen years during which there was no sawmill and consequently no sawdust. Since then there has always existed in the river a plentiful supply of sawdust. There is an excellent natural fish-way—a sluice brook from the lake—a kind of fish-way that far surpassed the highly vaunted but always doubtful fish-ladder. Since the erection of this sawmill the numbers of salmon have very largely increased. I attribute this remarkable increase, not to sawdust, but to Mr. Wilnot's occasional tribute of young fry from his hatchery at Bedford."

I think this is one of the points largely overlooked by the gentlemen who have been quoted by the hon. Minister of Marine. It must be remembered that these gentlemen are particularly devoted to the interest of fishing, so that their minds are very much bent in the direction of considering the effects of all sorts of so-called pollutions upon fish; and when men come to have remarkably strong opinions in one direction, they are not likely to be influenced in the contrary direction by any evidence that can be brought. I will call the Minister's attention to the fact that the inspector who preceded the present inspector in that district took strong issue with the gentleman whose report he has quoted. The late inspector of fisheries, Mr. Rogers, no matter what may be his differences with the department and his connection with the controversies with regard to the benefit of fish ladders of various kinds, is a gentleman of great ability and wide observation; and, although he reported to the department originally on the same lines as quoted by the Minister, yet in subsequent years, after careful investigation of the matter, he saw reason to alter his opinions. Then, the present inspector of fisheries, also a gentleman of keen observation, who has devoted considerable attention to this matter, and who threw himself recently into it with a great deal of energy, has come to the same conclusion that the hon. member for Lunenburg (Mr. Kaulbach) and the hon. member for Annapolis (Mr. Mills) have reached in regard to the comparative harmlessness of sawdust upon fish life, at any rate in the La Have River, and he joins with these petitioners in favour of exemption. Now, this fact ought to have a great deal of weight with the Minister and with this House, that men who are greatly interested in this matter, who are careful observers, and who have been in the past strenuous agents of the Minister of Marine in enforcing the law, and in educating those about them in the principles of the law, have differed from the gentlemen who have reported on the subject. I will, however, continue to read a few extracts from Mr. Silver's letter, showing his opinion on the subject :

"But this marked increase in the number of fish visiting this river of late years proves effectually that sawdust does not check their increase or drive them from a stream when other conditions are favourable. Impassable mill dams are the great factors in the destruction of our river fisheries."

This is a point on which Mr. Rogers dwells with a great deal of ability. It may be true that his mind was influenced to a great extent by being the owner of a fish ladder of whose merits he made great claims; but at all events the evidence strongly supports him that a good fish-way would go far to keep the river free from rubbish. That sawdust

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does become innocuous and harmless to fish to a large degree, Mr. Silver shows :

"Pour in all the sawdust you please, gentlemen in the lumber trade, but do not vex the lordly soul of the salmon by fencing him off from the upper reaches of his river where the spawning beds lie, and without reaching which his aspiring spirits droops and dies, and his race becomes extinct. See that his onward passage is not barred by cruel mill dams, without means of further ascent, and he will grow fat and flourish in spite of sawdust. In further confirmation of my opinion I may state that in the small river referred to one of the best pools for years was immediately below the saw mill, where I have seen salmon dart out from a bed of sawdust where they have been resting, at my fly. It is true that the sawdust has of late filled up this particular resting spot, and the fish have moved to another part of the pool, but this would have happened had there been a deposit of gravel on the place, or any other substance than sawdust. In further support of my views. I may also mention that in a brook near Windsor, part of the stream is full of sawdust and the upper part is free: that trout are found in larger numbers in the waters that are sometimes of the consistency of pea soup with sawdust than in the clear stream, and that the best pool of all, the mill pond, is lined with sawdust, has sawdust on the sides, sawdust on the bottom, and sawdust floating, and the bellies of the fish are yellow from resting on sawdust. Also, that in the Gaspereaux River, near Benjamin's mill, salmon are caught with the fly in water often thick with sawdust floating. Piscator asserts that the current is 'too strong where a salmon or trout would spawn to allow sawdust to remain on the spawning bed.' Now, I do not agree with this statement. I know spawning beds that could easily be ruined by a deposit of sawdust, but I do not consider this important. For there are always other spawning beds to be found, and even in a short river new places favourable for spawning ground would not be far to seek. In the Port Medway River, near Greenfield, an excellent pool has been much injured by partially filling up with sawdust, but there are scores of other pools on the river where the fish can rest. It is surprising how nice they are about their resting places. I have known a good pool ruined by a freshet depositing gravel in little hollows where they were wont to call a halt on their march. I heartily agree with the views quoted from Charles Hallock. I have never quite forgiven him for publishing a list of salmon many years ago (see 'the Fishing Tourist,' page 30) including 'spring silver salmon,' 'weak toothed,' 'white,' 'square tailed,' 'spring,' 'hooked nose' (running in the autumn) 'hump-backed,' 'dog, or spotted salmon;' for each of which so-called variety he adduces a specific Latin name. He has doubtless since much condensed this formidable category. He has earned a reputation that gives weight to his utterances on fish; and Mr. Davison may congratulate himself on having 'smoked out' such a widely recognized authority on his side of the fence. As to the effect on navigation of sawdust at the mouths of streams, I am hardly qualified to give an opinion. But I have stood where the following rivers empty into the sea: The Ingraham, the La Have, the Port Medway, the Liverpool, the Sable, the Jordan, the Shelburne, the Musquodoboit, the two Salmon Rivers, the Ship Harbour stream, and I have failed to observe that navigation has been interfered with in any degree that can attract serious attention. At the mouth of the La Have is the only place where I have heard any complaints at all and these struck me as of a very trivial nature. A steam dredge could in a few days remove the accumulations of a long series of years—if they were found to be inconvenient to vessels loading or unloading.

Now, the Minister did not dwell to a very great extent upon the question of inconvenience to navigation, although this has been a strong argument in regard to La Have River. I think any objection made on the ground of the tendency of sawdust to injure navigation, can be completely met on the ground that in this particular case the mill-owners, the Messrs. Davisons referred to, and other mill-owners on that river, are the parties most interested in preserving the navigation of the river, and that it is not to their interest to ask for an exemption from the general operation of this Act, which would tend to hamper, if not destroy, their business. Now, in former public correspondence with the hon. Minister of Marine, it appeared that these gentlemen—who have strong political feelings,