

20th of September it would give the one hundred and six days originally intended. Having, practically, more days on which men can work within those dates there would be less temptation for the packers to make up a given number of cans by fishing during the unwholesome time. The change would, in a measure, suit the requirements of the south side of the island as well as of the north. Until further developments in the business shall necessitate other arrangements the change above suggested would satisfy all interested with the exception perhaps of a few. Trade jealousies are not in my way, otherwise it might be added that hostility to a change in the fishing season in Prince Edward Island comes not from islanders, but from competing packers on the mainland.

Having at the close of last year held office but a short time, I hesitated to express a definite opinion in the Annual Report. Further observation justifies me in definitely recommending to your Honor, on the grounds above stated, that the lobster fishery for the Province of Prince Edward Island (only) commence on the twentieth day of May and close on the twentieth day of September. This recommendation is made, not that a greater number of fish may be taken, but that the business of the season being practically stretched over a greater number of working days may offer less temptation to destroy the breeders necessary for continued reproduction.

In the last Annual Report, pages 267-8, it was brought to notice that sooner or later a system of licensing the sites for lobster factories would have to be introduced, and it was added that in view of many complications that now exist and are certain to multiply, probably the earlier it was done the easier it would be to become master of the situation. Another year's experience goes strongly to confirm the suggestion.

Several applications for licenses have been made and have been forwarded to the Department with my remarks on each individual case. The object sought to be attained is to secure certain limits of shore necessary for the healthful prosecution of an industry that floats a large amount of capital and employs almost exclusively Canadian labor.

At present no factory is secure against unfair competition. The legitimate trader carefully selects a site at considerable outlay of money and research, erects buildings thereon and hazards some thousands of dollars in the enterprise. To carry on the business a clear stretch of sea is required of from two to four miles according to the number of traps to be set out. His success during the first few weeks is watched, and if the experiment seems to pay, other parties crowd on the locality by erecting competing factories alongside on the beach, or on some scrap of land purchased for a trifle from some farmer who has a shore frontage. The direct result is overfishing. The Inspector has been called three times during the past season to adjust disputes caused by the overlapping of traps belonging to adjacent factories. The system as it now stands is eminently unsatisfactory.

The only practical remedy is in the assignment of lobster fishing stations, similar in principle to the salmon fishing stations on the shores of the mainland.

Objections have been made that the power to grant licenses rests with the local Government of the Province as having acquired the right to the fishery reserves by becoming purchasers of the original land grants. On this subject I refer to my correspondence with the Department, of date 12th April last. At present the question is less complicated than it may speedily become with the rapid increase of factories. The peculiar tenure of land in this Province may make it necessary, under section 2 of the Fisheries Act, to submit a case to the law officers of the Crown, in which contingency the points would seem to be: whether the Dominion Government, as administering the general interest of Her Majesty in the Fisheries,—or whether the Local Government (and through it the holders of shore frontages from it), as purchasers of the original grants from the Crown have the right to issue license? In other words, whether or not power is inherent in the General Government solely, to administer the fisheries of the migratory fish of the sea, and, in pursuance of that administration (lobster fishing being a fishery of the shore,—and shell-fish being under the Act), to lay off the beach of this Island with the waters of Canada adjoin-