

At a conference of the fishery inspectors, held at Ottawa during the month of April, 1891, the existing state of the oyster fishing industry of the Dominion, and the best means of securing its expansion and improvement, was fully discussed, with the result that the following recommendations were made :—

- (1.) That no fee be charged for licenses.
- (2.) No one shall fish for, catch, or have in possession, any oysters the product of the Dominion of Canada, between the 1st day of May and the 30th day of September in each year, both days inclusive, and that in all partially depleted beds no fishing in the winter season through the ice be allowed; the several inspectors to furnish the department with a list of such beds, and the department to make the necessary regulations for such prohibition.
- (3.) No one shall fish for, catch, or possess any "round" oysters under 2 inches in diameter of shell, nor "long" oysters under 3 inches of outer shell. All oysters taken under these dimensions to be immediately restored to the water, under penalty of fine and forfeiture of all materials, implements, or appliances used, and the cancellation of the license.
- (4.) That all productive oysters beds now in existence in the waters of Canada be divided with as little delay as possible into three sections, which sections shall only be fished alternately, one section in each year, under the control of the local fishery officers, upon some general plan prepared by the department.
- (5.) The committee recommend that the department take the necessary measures to re-stock as many of the exhausted beds as possible, and that leases or licenses for a term of years be granted to parties willing to cultivate oysters, where no productive beds now exist, upon such conditions as the department may deem best.
- (6.) Also, that mud-digging be prohibited within 200 yards of any live oyster bed; then only at such place, or places, as may be prescribed by a fishery officer.

APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC.

It is a well known fact that a great many localities in the Maritime Provinces which were, at one time, noted for the quality of their oysters as well as for the fertility of the beds from which these molluscs were taken, have of late years become greatly depleted, and in some cases quite exhausted, owing chiefly to reckless and inordinate modes of fishing and the utter absence of any artificial aid in the propagation of the species, or care in the protection and cultivation of the grounds to which they were indigenous.

Finding, from enquiry, that considerable satisfaction was manifested among residents of localities where exhausted oyster beds were to be found at the action taken by the department, and that a general appreciation existed as to the necessity of closing them against fishing for a number of years, for the purpose of giving them time to recuperate, the following form of petition was circulated in order to strengthen the hands of the department :—

"To His Excellency
The Right Honourable Sir FREDERICK ARTHUR STANLEY, &c., &c.,
Governor General of Canada.

"Your petitioners having learned that Parliament has made an appropriation to meet the expenses in connection with the survey of oyster beds, beg to set forth :

"There once existed in this locality, viz., extensive oyster beds, the working of which not only furnished employment to many, but also proved an export of considerable value, but from over-fishing and other causes the yield of the beds referred to has, for some years past, being falling off, till at the present time they are, if not wholly so, to a large extent unproductive.