

FISHERIES

FISH abound around the shores and in the bays and rivers of the Province, the annual market value being about one and a quarter million dollars. Deep sea fish include lobster, mackerel, cod, herring, hake and haddock; in the bays and rivers oysters, quahaugs, clams, smelts, tomcods, eels, alewives, salmon and trout are to be found, each in its season. The relative values of these different fisheries may be seen from the following official table recently published and representing, approximately, the average yearly market values:

Lobsters.....	\$630,947
Oysters.....	61,146
Cod.....	49,876
Herring	44,128
Mackerel.....	34,502
Clams and Quahaugs.....	11,852

The other varieties, in lesser values, make, with the above, the total average of about one and a quarter millions.

The lobster business, which up to the present is the most valuable of all the Island fisheries, employs about 5,000 persons, including women, girls, and boys in the canneries, of which there are in all about 200, valued at about \$175,000, and using some 400,000 lobster traps, valued at about \$325,000.

The oyster fishery has, during the past few years, been attracting special attention.

This luscious bivalve abounded in almost all the bays and rivers of the Province, and for many years afforded profitable employment to hundreds of fishermen. No efforts were made to conserve the industry and the constant reaping without sowing had the inevitable result. Total extinction threatened the much prized oyster. The rate of decline in the annual oyster harvest will be seen in the fact that the total catch in 1882, which amounted to 57,042 barrels, valued at \$3.00 per barrel, had in 1912 fallen to 8,835 barrels, valued at \$7.50 per barrel.

Successive provincial administrations had grappled with the subject with a view to preventing the extinction of this valuable shellfish. Jurisdiction over the inland waters of the Island had, according to an interpretation of the British North America Act, been somewhat vaguely divided between the Federal and Provincial Governments and a satisfactory solution of the conservation problem seemed impossible. It was not till 1911 that definite steps were taken when an agreement was con-

cluded between the present Dominion and Provincial Governments by which the latter was entrusted with the sole administration of the oyster areas.

Under this agreement steps were at once taken to convert the depleted and barren areas into oyster farms. Richmond Bay, by far the wealthiest oyster section in the Province, was surveyed and laid off into measured areas. Of the 30,000 acres in the Bay 14,000 were reserved for public fishing and the remainder offered to lessees at a rental of one to five dollars a year per acre. Five thousand acres were taken up by companies during the first year and the work of development was commenced in earnest. Bottoms were cleaned up, young oysters planted and already there are many indications that the original wealth of this magnificent Bay will not only be restored but that there will be greater production than ever. Other areas in different parts of



1. Fishing Quahaugs 2. Curtain Island 3. Fishing Oysters 4. Sampling Oysters

the Province have been and are being surveyed, and oyster culture promises shortly to form one of the most lucrative industries in the Province.

The fishing business of the Province, which has been seriously handicapped by the rehandling made necessary on account of the Island's insular position, will be given a new impetus by the Car Ferry which is now under way and which will unite the Prince Edward Island and Intercolonial Railways, making it possible to ship carloads to any point on the continent without breaking bulk. This Car Ferry, which is now nearing completion and which with the standardizing of the gauge of the Prince Edward Island Railway is estimated to cost in the vicinity of ten million dollars, will be a boon not only to the fishing interests, but to all the activities, commercial and industrial, of the Province, making it a part of the Continental Railway System and eliminating many transportation difficulties which hitherto have hampered the trade of the Province.