

Marine and Fisheries—Fisheries Branch.

PETIT-DE-GRAT.

Alewives.—The past season's catch has been the poorest ever experienced and is reported to be fast becoming extinct.

Codfish were first reported on May 30th, but the catches were light until about July 1st when they struck off into deep water where good catches were occasionally made. The best catches are reported to have been made in August. Throughout September and October very little fishing was done as bait could not be obtained and fishermen had to dig clams which caused a great loss of time. During the latter part of June and former part of July good fishing was reported on Quero Bank. It is further reported that in the latter part of September dogfish were so plentiful that hooks were carried away when fishermen tried for cod. Total season's catch is estimated to show a decrease of about 450 cwt. as compared with 1897. In addition to the total catch it is reported that 1,500 galls. of oil were extracted from the cod and haddock and exported.

Dogfish.—This destructive fish made its appearance about August 1st and has caused an estimated loss of about \$2,000 by eating and destroying nets. Fishermen so dread these fish that they would not set their nets which probably accounts for the shortage in the herring catch.

Haddock struck on May 10th, and very fair catches were made each day throughout the month. During the remainder of the season the catches varied from fair to poor, although intermittent. Some boats caught as high as 50 cwt., and the total season's catch will show an increase, compared with 1897, of about 1,900 cwt. which sold at \$2.25 per cwt.

Herring appeared much earlier than usual, and during the latter part of April light catches of small sized fish were made. This assisted the fishermen very greatly as it provided bait for their trawls and thus did much to increase the catch of haddock. From June 15th until about August 10th they were scarce, but about latter date again struck in and good catches were occasionally made. It is estimated that the total catch will be about 1,400 barrels, which is reported to include the baiting of 23 bankers of which four were American vessels under Dominion Government license.

Lobster fishing commenced about March 20th, and proved fair until about the last of May, when they commenced falling off. Some of the fishermen then hauled up their gear and prosecuted the cod fishery while others kept lobstering which appeared to decline from day to day. It is estimated that the season's catch has been 1,400 cases and 60,000 fresh lobsters exported to the United States. Although the catch has been somewhat below that of 1897, fishermen will be about as well remunerated, as the prices obtained were higher than in the previous year, viz.: from 6 cents to 7 cents for 10½-inch lobsters and over for export, while the smaller ones for canning realized \$2.25 per cwt.

Mackerel struck in fair quantities on May 25th, and fairly good catches were made until about June 8th, since which time they have been scarce. The only reason assigned for their not appearing in large numbers is that they are too constantly chased by seiners which compels them to take a different course and usually pass in very deep water. The total season's catch is estimated at 30 barrels and 550 fresh fish which were sold for home consumption at 5 cents. This in comparison with last season shows a decrease of about 60 per cent. In addition to the home fleet there were three vessels fitted out and proceeded to the Magdalen Islands and did fairly well. Their total catch is estimated to have been 180 barrels which they disposed of at an average of \$10 per barrel.

Salmon were first reported on May 25th, which is somewhat earlier than in previous seasons. Although they did not appear in such quantities as in the previous year, the catches were very fair, as nets were set inshore, until June 23rd when they began to disappear. This fish is sold fresh, and not salted, as they demand a better price when fresh.

Squid appeared about July 7th, but being scarce boat fishermen could not capture sufficient for bait, and were compelled to dig clams. There is a noticeable falling off in this valuable bait fish.