

ST. JOHN COUNTY.

Overseer O'Brien :—The great bulk of lobsters caught were sent alive to the United States' markets.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY.

Overseer Campbell :—The lobster catch was somewhat larger than last year, but smaller compared with what it formerly was in this district. The American legal size being $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and ours but 9 inches, has the effect of depleting our waters and protecting theirs. To give our lobsters an equal chance for protection, our standard should not be less than that across the border.

Overseer Ash :—Lobsters were not so plentiful, but a fair catch was made and sent fresh to Eastport.

SYNOPSIS OF ANNUAL REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF FISHERIES FOR 1891.

LOBSTER FISHERY.

Inspector Hackett :—Lobster fishing most successful last season all around coast. At beginning of season lobsters were of good size and condition for packing, but about 15th July they began to run small and became inferior in quality. Ice left coast early, and some lobsters were landed at Miminigash on the 29th April. Most factories began packing about 10th May; this is considered an early start inside the gulf. Prospect of good season and high prices induced people to make large preparations and additions to plant. There were 142 factories operated this season, as against 98 in 1890. About 138,000 traps were used; an increase of 42,000 over last year. There were 3,670,414 lbs. canned, as against 2,416,794 lbs. in 1890. Each trap's produce was equal to about $26\frac{1}{2}$ one pound cans, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ one pound cans more per trap than in 1890. This increase is due to the 15 days extension, which was taken advantage of by about 80 packers on the south side. Had all factories closed on 15th July, as in 1890, the production per trap would have been less than in 1890, showing that the fishery, while improving under shortened season and better protection, cannot stand the enormous drain made upon it by use of so many traps. Large preparations are now being made for next season; at least 50 more factories will operate in 1892 than in 1891, thus bringing the number of factories up to 200, equal to about 200,000 traps. As six lobsters generally fill one can, about 22,000,000 were killed last season to make up the pack. With increased appliances to be used in 1892, and traps allowed to capture the same number of lobsters as in 1891, at least 300,000,000 lobsters will be required to supply canneries in 1892.

The fecundity of lobsters is amazing, each female being said to produce from twelve to twenty thousand eggs each season, thus hatching tens of millions of young lobsters around our shores. One would think it impossible to exhaust this fishery, but experience has proved the contrary. As the fishery in the Gulf was much depleted by over-fishing a few years ago, great care will be required in future to prevent its going back into same condition. The new regulations will bring this fishery more directly under the control of the department's officers.

Inspector Hockin :—The estimated value of the lobster catch in my division is 533,647. The catch on the Atlantic coast exceeds that of last year by about 6 per cent, while on the Straits of Northumberland, the increase was 30 per cent; this is partly due to the extension of time from July 15th to August 1st; the effect of which was to lengthen the season by about 25 per cent, but it does not necessarily contribute to the increase of the catch for this year. At the beginning of the season, lobsters were large and abundant, but later on the catch was small not paying larger factories. The largest packers did not operate after the 15th July; many who did expressed regret at the extension of time, as it does not pay large establishments. As soon as European buyers heard of the extension of time, they took alarm, expecting that larger quantities would be placed on the markets. Prices dropped and did not since regain their former point. The excellent prices realized, and perhaps