

five consecutive years would be required to produce marketable fish, and a total cessation from fishing during each alternate lustrum of five years would be necessary to keep up the full supply. Needless to say, such an arrangement is both complicated and impossible.

To put the north and south coast of our narrow island under different regulations would be to establish a precedent that might become troublesome here and elsewhere. In all competition better and worse chances occur that it is beyond the line of a Government to supplement. For instance, the choice of locality in which to carry on an enterprise is a matter of individual judgment that can scarcely be expected to change general regulations excepting under very exceptional circumstances. Nevertheless, the packers on the south of the island, having mostly selected their sites before the fishery regulations took shape for the Province, labor under disadvantages. Their grievances are explained in a letter to the Inspector from Mr. Anderson, proprietor of an extensive factory at Belle Creek, Queen's County. He writes:—

“On the south side of the island, of the four months given at present there are only two months and twenty days at furthest that fishing can be done to be even paying. Scarcely a fish can be caught till the 20th of May; from that time they are good till 1st of August, when they begin to soften and continue bad or unfit for canning until the latter part of August. In August plenty of fish are caught, but one-third of them at least are useless and are thrown away and thus uselessly destroyed. This system is very destructive, as fishermen put out more traps in order to counterbalance the loss from culling. Now, the canning of the other two-thirds, being very inferior fish, has undoubtedly already been the cause of hurting the reputation of our lobsters in the home market for a large proportion of those canned in August fail before being shipped, which does not at all occur at any other season. What is wanted is to have the time changed so as to be from the 15th of May to the 15th of October, with August left out. Much capital has been invested to be only a loss and ruinous to the reputation of our island fish.”

I endorse the statements put forth by Mr. Anderson, and would suggest that the remedy lies in a general change of time for the whole island, as discussed in the following paragraph:—

The design of the Government in fixing by general order the period of lobster fishing from 20th April to 20th August, was evidently to give fishermen one hundred and six clear working days (this year 116). Practically they have no more than about seventy days at the utmost. As thus, respectable packers will not now can soft-shelled or breeding fish, and the period during which these bear too large a proportion to leave a margin of profit on the general work of the factory is about a month—the month of July; deduct, say, half the working days of July and only ninety-three days remain, from which have further to be deducted at least twenty days of unseasonable weather at the beginning of the season, thus leaving only seventy three days, fair or stormy, to work. The factories are supposed to open on the 20th of April. According to a record supplied by the official Meteorological Observer on the north coast, horses crossed the river ice for the last time this spring on the 22nd of April, and that ice drifted for many days about the coast. On April 23rd, 28th, 29th, 30th, May 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 18th, 19th and 20th the wind blew from various quarters for a part or the whole of each day with the force of a fresh breeze sufficient to raise a sea too broken to be safe for setting out traps.

Moreover, a circular letter sent by me to every factory shows the 13th of May was the earliest day on which any establishment opened, and on that day were only two, five on the 15th, sixteen between the 18th and 21st, nineteen between the 24th and 30th May, and the remainder in June. Further, an enquiry, “Were lobsters perfectly sound on the day of closing,” has been replied to in writing by every packer, to the effect that the fish were never in better order than on the 30th August, when the factories were obliged to be shut down. This is evidence that cannot be over-ridden by any arbitrary theory of time so far as this Province is concerned. Were our fishing season changed so as to commence on the 20th May and to close on the