

added, squared with the Government's ante-election platform. There is, however, a wide distance between the two plans, buying roads already built, if possible, or building others, presumably in opposition to them. The former would recommend itself over the latter; but can it be carried out? Will the Northern Pacific Company sell its Manitoba branches, when it is seeking liberty to build more, west of the province line? Will the C.P.R. sell its branches? Not very likely. And are there any means of compelling them? Some years may be wasted in negotiations for purchase, and so the election platform may remain unfulfilled. One power of coercion the local Government does possess; it can threaten to build competing lines, so that neither the one nor the other would pay.

The Registrar-General of Ontario has issued a circular, notifying medical men that if they do not report births, which they professionally attend, the penalties of the law will be exacted. There are undoubtedly some omissions to register, and this circular will have an effect in correcting the evil. When this is done, if done effectually, we shall see how far non-registration goes to account for the deficiency of published births, below the normal rate. We suspect that the chief cause of the reported low birth rate is outside of deficient registration. We hear now that the registered birth rate is low in Montreal. Heretofore the Quebec province has given a high birth rate, and what generally accompanies it, a high death rate among children; but if we are to have a low birth rate in the cities of that province, we must conclude that the influence of the priest has waned, in one important particular, and that a common cause is affecting the birth rate in both provinces.

On certain pulp wood concessions, the Opposition in the Ontario Legislature made a strong effort to defeat the Government. It failed, however. Objection was taken to their extent and also to the fact that the limits were not put up to competition. The necessity of husbanding our pulp woods in reason has occurred to many, who have been wondering what we shall do for paper when all the pulpwood is consumed. That difficulty seems to be already in way of being met. In England it has been discovered that any kind of plants will make paper, and many kinds particularly good paper. It is said that one acre of land will grow, of certain plants, enough to make three tons of paper, on the assumption that three tons of plants will make one ton of paper. If this should prove to be the case, we may make our minds easy about the future material for our newspapers and books and the thousands other things now made of paper.

FISHERIES OF THE DOMINION.

The value of Canadian fisheries is scarcely grasped by the average inland dweller. We are so accustomed to consider that our fields, our forests, our mines, and our factories are our great sources of wealth, that we do not give sufficient attention to the enormous source of wealth in the salt water and fresh water fisheries of this great country. It is a very significant fact that the produce of our fisheries exceeds twenty million dollars a year. In 1897 the value of fish taken was \$22,783,000, an unprecedented catch, and in 1898 the value was

\$19,667,000, making the average of the two years \$21,235,000. But in considering this great direct asset, we should not forget the indirect value of our fisheries as one of the great industries of Canada. The Blue Book of the Marine and Fisheries Department shows that no fewer than eighty thousand men were engaged during the season of 1898 in our fishing industry, using boats, nets and other fishing implements to the value of \$9,860,000. Besides the 72,877 fishermen, using 38,675 boats, and 6,228,000 fathoms of nets, there were more than a thousand schooners manned by 8,650 sailors employed in this vast industry. The lobster plant alone is valued at \$1,334,120. This amount comprises 814 canneries, with their 1,335,640 traps, giving employment to 16,548 persons.

The distribution of this industry is shown by a table giving the yield by provinces, the fisheries of Manitoba, the Territories, and Ontario being, of course, fresh water fishing. Increases and decreases, as compared with the preceding year, are indicated below:

Provinces.	Value.	Increase.	Decrease.
Nova Scotia	\$7,226,035		\$ 864,312
New Brunswick	3,849,357		84,778
British Columbia	3,713,101		2,425,764
Quebec	1,761,440	\$ 24,429	
Ontario	1,433,632	143,810	
P. E. Island	1,070,206	115,257	
Manitoba and N. W. Territories	613,335		25,061

Total, 1898\$19,667,106

The great yield of 1897 was especially in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, and in 1898 the same provinces furnish comparative deficits exceeding three million dollars. There falls to be added to this total, however, the great quantity of fish upon which the Indians of British Columbia largely subsist, for no account appears to have been taken of this factor. The wonderful yield of salmon in 1897, and successful cod and haddock fishing in that year, is what makes the total so much greater than in 1898. The relative value of different kinds of fish taken in 1898 is of interest, thus:

Kinds of Fish.	Value.	Increase.	Decrease.
Lobsters	\$3,887,939	\$402,674	\$2,520,868
Salmon	3,159,306		912,511
Cod	2,996,583		111,623
Herring	1,987,454		
Mackerel	694,591	97,285	
Trout	693,826	158,954	200,926
Haddock	681,557		29,256
Whitefish	622,173		
Sardines	429,022	72,225	8,027
Smelts	420,142		
Hake	391,550	32,472	
Halibut	291,276	71,938	80,600
Pickarel	235,995		
Oysters	217,024	36,536	
Sturgeon	199,160	9,182	30,236
Alewives	159,424		232,604
Pollock	144,708		

In addition to the eighteen kinds of fish or marine animals taken, as given above (trout, pickarel, sturgeon, and whitefish, having been caught in fresh water, aggregating \$1,876,000 in value), there were eels, shad and tomcod, to the value of over \$100,000 each, in the list. The item of bass, \$124,845, seems to include not only fresh water white and black bass of Ontario, but also the sea-bass of the Maritime Provinces. It is further estimated that \$345,388 worth of fish were used as bait; that fish oil to the value of \$199,787 was produced, and