

“The increased demand for labor, is, I think, one reason why the salmon and herring fisheries have not been more attended to this season. I trust the Department will have a few more wardens appointed, especially one on the Middle River, one at Toney’s River, and one at Carriboe River.”

Walter Murray, Esq., the officer in charge of the Northern district of this county says :—“By reason of ill health I have not this season been able to make a tour through my district, and therefore have no diary account to submit and am unable to fill in the items of the return in the form directed. From information received from reliable persons, I am able to state that the catch of salmon this year has considerably exceeded that of last year ; the greater part above home consumption having been exported in ice. No canning of salmon has been done this year, the establishment having been removed to another station. The catch of herring, mackerel, cod and hake, has been rather under that of last year ; these kinds of fish did not strike in so plentifully. As to fishing berths a few disputes have occurred. In one case the party in possession yielded the claim to the owner of the soil adjacent, and in another case at Little Harbor the matter was settled by referring the dispute to Thomas Graham, Esq., the nearest Overseer. No warden was appointed for Burney’s River, and the state of my health did not permit active supervision of the others.”

*Guysborough County.*—James A. Tory, Overseer for this County furnishes the following report :—“The inland or river fishery of this County is not prosecuted to any great extent for the purpose of exportation ; nearly all the fish caught in the rivers are consumed at home, but are included in the returns.

I must again bring to your notice that a part of St. Mary’s River, in the County of Guysborough, is without a warden and until one is appointed to guard that portion of it, (the forks) spearing and other illegal modes of destroying fish is practised and will be continued. I have not heard of any other complaints all over the County during the past year. Salmon have been very plentiful and this season have got up the rivers early without much destruction ; this was owing to the rivers being high at the time they entered them.

In comparing the returns of this County with that of last year, you will perceive that the catch of fish has fallen off, especially in mackerel and herring, which may appear strange, as no doubt these fish were as plentiful along the coast this season as last. But it can be accounted for in the following manner :—At the commencement of the season, no inducements were held out by the merchants and traders to the fishermen to catch them, as the price then offered for the past year’s fish was extremely low, and it was feared the present year would be no better, which led many persons who had formerly been engaged in the fisheries to quit them and seek other sources of employment. Those who continued in the business did not follow up that branch of it in the early part of the season, but allowed the fish to pass unmolested. Also last season there were large quantities of herring brought from the Magdalen Islands and Port Hood, this year there was none, hence the falling off in those two species of fish. As the season advanced the price of mackerel improved, also the quality of them, which induced the fishermen to turn their attention to them again, which resulted in a fine catch in the latter part of the season, and from the prices obtained I have no doubt the season will be financially quite as good as last year, especially when you compare the catch of each year with the number of men employed. In fact I may say that the fishermen engaged the present year have done far better, and are now in better circumstances than they were at this season last year. You will also see that the catch of dry fish when compared with the men employed is largely in excess of last year and has commanded a fair and remunerative price.

I would bring to your notice that I think some regulation ought to be made respecting Lobster fishing in Nova Scotia, for it is impossible this shell-fish can stand the drain now made upon it. If the female lobster, while the spawn is upon her, was prohibited from being taken or used, perhaps it would be sufficient to continue that fishery for a much longer period.