

## The Ontario Commercial Fisheries

### HOW AND WHY DESTROYED

#### I.

In one of those old English country churches the congregation had become so reduced as to be almost a scandal. Some of the ladies persuaded the rector to allow them to decorate the church at Christmas time to make it attractive and draw in the wavering worshippers. This was done elaborately with evergreens, holly, mistletoe and flowers. It all failed to fill another seat. When the rector went into the pulpit he looked around the church, gave a sigh, and said: "My dear brethren, there is a great deal of cover, but very little game."

That is very much the condition of the forests and fields, streams and lakes in Ontario. Laws, regulations, water and cover we have in plenty, but very little fish and game.

A mental effort is required to dissect the fishery reports. Probably not one man in a hundred thousand attempts it. In 1903 "juggling with the figures" began. The catch of fish in that year was valued at \$1,535,144. This catch, had it been valued according to precedent, would be \$1,200,362. An apparent surplus of \$334,782 was created.

#### MISLEADING FIGURES.

To the ordinary reader (and in commercial fishing matters almost the entire community are "ordinary") this would have the appearance of an increased catch and a prosperous year. But more than \$300,000 had been added to values, in the same way that an American life insurance company manufactures a reserve. This system has been continued. The