

Ontario Fishery Commission.

which is rubbed off in towing the logs to the American ports: these rafts are very large, covering sometimes ten acres and more; the constant rolling caused by the action of the water, rubs these logs together and grinds off the bark and soft wood which fall to the bottom, when the currents and winds drive this stuff into the nets making them worthless. This is a great evil to the fisheries; this bark from the logs does not work up on the shore. (p. 90, pt. II.)

James Noble, of Cook's mills, fisherman and fish dealer, twelve years, said:—This year whitefish are scarcer by reason of the bark and stuff from the saw-log rafts and booms which seem to drive them away. This stuff also effects the nets and prevents their catching fish as well. The meshes get clogged up with this refuse, and fish won't enter them as freely as they otherwise would; it is next to impossible to get this stuff off the meshes of the nets, it is actual ruination to the gill-nets. This stuff comes from the saw-logs when being towed across the bay; the constant rolling together rubs off the bark and fibre and causes the damage to the nets; these rafts are very numerous, the logs come from different rivers on the North Shore, they are put together in large booms and towed by tugs. They go slowly, they are all sizes, they may be a quarter to half a mile in length and nearly the same in width; they are taken to Bay City, United States, this is done since the duty has been taken off logs; it is causing rapid destruction to the fisheries here and is also keeping thousands of men out of employment in working in the mills as they are now nearly all closed up; if this is allowed to continue the whitefish fishery will be destroyed very soon. (p. 92, pt. II.)

Edward Fourcheau, of Little Current, fisherman for ten years: Whitefish and salmon-trout have fallen off during my fishing operations; it is caused by the changed state of the water, and from the effects of towing saw logs, and pine refuse from mills; the saw-dust has done a great deal of harm, but laterally saw-logs are doing a very great injury. In towing them across the bay in rafts they roll about from the action of the water and the outer and the inner bark is ground off when it becomes water-soaked and settles to the bottom and catches upon the meshes of the nets, and when the winds blow it is also stirred about and is washed into the nets; this, besides destroying the nets, also drives the fish away; some nets become perfectly useless; a great many have to be thrown away, the corks and leads are the only parts of the net that can be saved; this damage is general in the north channel; these saw-log rafts will take two tugs to tow them, and are so large as to cover fifty and one hundred acres of the surface of the bay; they have to remain some time on account of head winds; all this time the grinding of the bark and soft parts is going on, this stuff gets water soaked it won't float to shore, but sinks and becomes distributed all over the bottom, and is driven into the meshes of the nets; this damage to the fisheries was not felt in former years nor before this saw-log towing took place. The taking off the duty off saw-logs has largely interfered with labour about here, most of the saw-mills are closed up, and the saw-logs are towed over to the United States. If the duty was put again on the logs, more saw-mills would be built here to cut up the logs in our own country; American tugs and labour take saw-log rafts across to the United States. (p. 95, pt. II.)

James Noble, of Killarney, engaged in fishing and dealing in fish for seventeen years, said:—If this excessive fishing goes on, and this new calamity from the saw-log business is not stopped the fishing industries in the Georgian Bay and north channel cannot last long; unless some strong measures are brought to bear to protect the fisheries, the formerly great fisheries in this section of the province must be soon done away. The way to remedy these difficulties from the saw-log question is to put an export duty on the logs, this would stop the great outlet of logs from this section into the United States; this would also give employment to thousands of Canadian hands, and open up again the saw mills, which are now shut up; and also stop the great evil to our fisheries which come from the refuse matter off the saw-logs in their transport in rafts to the United States; these rafts cover fifteen and twenty acres, taking two large steam tugs to tow them, they go very slowly, only from one to two miles an hour. The logs are continually grinding together, rubbing off the outside and inside bark, which sinks to the bottom, getting on the nets and destroying both the nets and the feeding and breeding grounds of our bay fisheries. (p. 97, pt. II.)