

LUNENBURG COUNTY.

From the western district of this county, Overseer Jost reports 'a falling off in the yield of the fisheries as compared with the returns of last year. The decrease appears to be in the in-shore fisheries of all kinds, especially those of mackerel and herring. The Labrador cod-fishing, also, was poor, yielding less than half fares to the vessels engaged. Fortunately but few were so employed this year. The decrease in the lobster-canning returns accounts for more than half the falling off above mentioned. There is no doubt that this business has been overdone and run down. The continual taking from the same grounds, without heeding time or regulations to effectually protect the spawning fish, has done and is doing its work. Formerly, the bulk of the lobsters brought in were from one and a half pounds each upwards; the average being two and two and one-half pounds. Now the bulk landed are only about the legal nine inches in length, from tip of nose to end of tail. The lobster establishment at Chester closed about the middle of the season this year. The catch of salmon and alewives was small.

A new fish-ladder has been placed in the dam of the gang mill, on Keddy's River. The obstruction formerly existing in Petite Rivière, near Conquerall Bridge, to which allusion was made in a former report, has been removed this year by means of a small grant of money from the Department, expended by James E. Hebb, now appointed a Warden for that district. He is instructed to be particular in preventing a recurrence of similar obstructions from mill rubbish and sawdust.

From the eastern district of this county, Overseer Redden reports a general decrease in the yield. Salmon were prevented from coming in-shore by the ice. Lobsters are on the decrease, owing to the destruction of small ones by fishermen, to evade the law. The catch of other fish is small, but this was partly compensated by the returns from Labrador. Gold River branch promises a good yield of alewives; and, with proper attention, the rivers of this division will yield an ample supply of fish. The fishery laws being new in this county, it is difficult for the officers to carry them out as well as they should be. The rivers, however, are in good working order, excepting Mushamush and Middle River Branch, which are obstructed by sawdust and natural causes. Martin's River was cleared up to the spawning grounds, and will be one of the best rivers in this division for gasperaux and salmon. Mushamush has a fish-way in good working order; but if sawdust is allowed to remain in the river, there cannot be a great increase of fish in that stream. There are some small streams in this district which require attention, such as Narrow's Brook, Kauback's Brook and Little East River. Salmon nets, under the Nova Scotia law, were so numerous that it became almost impossible for fish to ascend the rivers; and Indians dipping during the night, destroyed the fish that succeeded in clearing the nets. The dipping cannot be prevented, unless night watchers be placed on the rivers, the vigilance of Wardens being insufficient to enforce the law. The bag, stake and floor nets, which used to be set too near the mouths of rivers, were a great hindrance to salmon entering them. These obstructions have been removed, and the fish have now a chance of reaching their spawning grounds. Overseer Redden also suggests that Middle River Branch, as well as the small streams above mentioned, receive the attention of the Department.

HALIFAX COUNTY.

Overseer Anderson reports from the eastern district of this county that, having had complaints made to him of the fish-pass at Moser's River being useless, as no fish could pass through it, he had to make six trips to that locality before he got the matters finally arranged. On his first visit the fact was fully apparent that the old fish-way was inefficient; and owing to ice on the dam and high water it was not until the third visit that repairs could be commenced. A difficulty then arose with the mill-owners as to whom should bear the cost of constructing the new fish-way, they having, in the mean time, torn down the old one, which had been built under the instructions of his predecessors, who had passed it as sufficient. The fish being