

Marine and Fisheries—Fisheries Branch.

Lobsters.—The heavy N.E. winds which prevailed in the early part of May retarded the setting of traps, but about the 14th they were said to have been in good quantities. In the latter part of May they slackened off considerably and were of small size. About the middle of June they were reported very scarce on outside grounds, but inshore they were more plentiful. Very few were taken the remainder of the season and the total catch is said to be at least 25 per cent less than last year. The 20 factories situated on Miscou and Shippegan Islands packed about 6,000 cases. These factories employ 400 men and 160 boats besides from 12 to 15 hands in each factory, packing, cracking, &c. On the mainland of Shippegan, four factories with about the same average catch, men and boats packed 1,000 cases. It is quite noticeable that this fishery is falling off yearly and that very many more traps are now used than formerly, with smaller returns proportionately.

Mackerel fishery is reported a total failure the past season, and but few barrels were taken.

Salmon of large size were reported in fair quantities on May 31st, but the following day were scarce and continued so until the last report on June 13th.

Smelt.—This fishery is extensively prosecuted, and catches find a ready market in New York and Boston. The work is carried on in winter, the fishermen building huts on the ice. Large openings are made in the ice and poles are erected on which the nets hang, and large quantities are thus taken.

GRAND MANAN.

Codfish were first reported this season on May 6th at Bulk Head, but the catches were light until about the 13th when they began to improve and during the following week boats varied from three to five quintals. On the 26th good fishing was reported on gravelly ground which continued until the end of the month. During the first week of June this fishing was very good at Bulk Head and vessels averaged eight quintals. From June 9th to 18th the catches were very fair. On July 9th it was reported that cod were after shrimp and would not bite; consequently but few were taken inshore. For the week ending July 23rd vessels were reported to have taken 18 quintals per vessel of three men to each. Very few were taken during the first three weeks of August, but from the 22nd until last of September the catches varied from fair to poor on soundings, Rippling and at Bulk Head. Catches during the first eight days of October were very light. It is estimated that the total season's catch will not exceed 700 quintals, which is a decrease in comparison with 1897.

Haddock were first taken on May 6th, and although the catches varied from fair to poor they were irregular and the season's catch will not exceed 500 quintals.

Hake appeared as early as May 16th the past season, and the catches were on an average fair until the end of that month, although they were reported plentiful on Bulk Head on the 21st and good on gravelly ground on the 26th. During the first three weeks of June they were fair and unusually large catches were made as it was very early for this fish to appear. From June 21st to August 8th they were light, but after latter date varied from fair to good until September 13th after which they were scarce. It is estimated that the total quantity cured and dried for market has been 5,000 quintals. In addition to this 400 barrels of fish oil have been put up here.

Halibut were only reported from May 11th to 31st during which time the catches were light.

Herring were first reported on May 17th when they are said to have been plentiful, but with the exception of them striking in and schooling at Bulk Head and on soundings in the latter part of the month, no catches were reported. With the exception of small herring in weirs at Seal Cove, which were used for bait on July 8th, no catches were reported until July 20th when light catches, averaging about two barrels per net of large fish, were made on northern side of Grand Manan. About July 30th fishermen were reported to be netting about four barrels per net of large fish and varied from one to five barrels throughout August. During the remainder of the season the average