



The "Lunge" "Are 'Game' to the last gasp." (From a drawing by C. W. Nash)

Fish and Fishing

Lunge, Pike and Pickerel. Our Inland Fisheries Neglected

By C. W. NASH

Next to agriculture, our fisheries should produce for Canada the greatest amount of wealth, of any of our natural resources. I am not now taking into consideration the ocean fisheries, but only those of our inland lakes and streams. These magnificent, fresh water areas were once teeming with fish of various valuable kinds, but within the last twenty-five years they have been so mismanaged, that legitimate commercial fishing in the settled parts of the country has become unremunerative, and the better known game fish have even in the back country been almost cleaned out, so that instead of being an article of common consumption, fish are now to many people almost a luxury. This is a matter that should interest the farmers as much or more than the dwellers in towns, and it seems to me that it is about time that they should bring some pressure to bear upon the Provincial Government to remedy this state of things and insist that some proper steps be taken to protect what fish are left during the spawning season and that reasonable efforts be made towards restocking our waters with fish suitable to the locality. As the matter now stands but little of practical utility is being done and every year shows a decreasing number of fish, so that it cannot be very long before our waters are entirely depleted.

The farmers themselves, however, are not altogether blameless

in this matter, for there are many streams throughout the country, once well stocked with trout or bass, but which are now fishless, owing to the pollution of the waters, so that no life can exist there, or by so clearing the banks of the streams and the springs which fed them of every tree and bush which sheltered them, that they are now dried up all the summer and are raging torrents filled with surface water in the spring, down which the fertilizing elements from the fields are drained to the lakes below.

Not only have they done this, but I am afraid that some have also done more or less illegal fishing, on the principle that if they did not get the fish, then "some other fellow would." This is such a bad excuse that it is even worse than none at all. A proper observance of the law by every responsible man is one of the first necessities of a civilized community, if only for the sake of example to those who are inclined to be lawless.

"LUNGE"

It seems to be an established article of belief amongst those who go "a-fishing" that the gamiest and altogether most to be desired specimen of the scaly tribe which they can obtain is the small-mouthed black bass. The "black bass," as they commonly style it. Undoubtedly it is a fine fish, and I am willing to concede that a black bass of about three pounds weight, if well

fed and in good trim, is pound for pound the equal if not the superior of any fish that swims. But there are other fish that grow larger and whose fighting qualities grow in proportion to their increase in weight, such as the muskallonge and northern pike of our waters. These fellows grow to a great size and when taken in their proper season are "game to the last gasp." So that while I am particularly fond of bass fishing, yet I rate fishing for "lunge" as better sport; in fact, if I were asked to go bass fishing when I might as well go after "lunge," I should feel somewhat like the man who, being asked "wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?" said "Yes, I will, but I would rather have her sister."

Muskallonge used to be very abundant in the St. Lawrence about the Thousand Islands, in the waters of the Trent Valley, Lake Scugog, Lake Simcoe, and many of our inland lakes where they grew to great size. In 1869 I saw a pair taken from Lake Simcoe. They were as near alike as two peas and weighed forty-four and forty-eight pounds respectively. These were October fish in the very height of condition and as beautiful as fish can be. One never sees such grand specimens now simply because these waters are so persistently netted that the fish have no chance to grow, though apart from that the conditions are just as favorable for their development to-day as