

It may be asserted without fear of contradiction, that most of the factories with 400 to 600 traps are run absolutely without capital. A rough shanty, a lobster dory (worth about \$8) for every 100 or 150 traps; some laths to make traps, and a few logs for firewood are all the implements required for a start. The "packer" then arranges with some speculative merchant or other to supply him with the balance of articles needed, such as tins, ropes, killocks, flour, pork, tea, &c. The catch is handed to the merchant, who in turn passes it to the exporter, and then squares accounts with the packer by endorsing his notes for such minimum amounts as will keep the concern going. Wages are generally in arrear; sometimes balances due to the hands are never paid. The merchant gets the profit, if any, and the packer makes little more than a bare subsistence. Under such circumstances it is manifest that the packer can feel very little interest in the kind of goods he puts on the market. To him, a can is a can, worth 6 or 8 cents additional; no matter whether it is trash. Such are some of the reasons which have given Prince Edward Island lobsters so bad a name on British markets. And it is precisely these small factories that have ruined the lobster fishery, and just such a class of packers who join any agitation that promises them longer fishing.

The shortening of the fishing season will act as a judicious check. Merchants will be chary of making advances to irresponsible parties, and it is probable that a good many of these small and destructive hand-to-mouth concerns will be wiped out to the ultimate benefit of the fishery, and the advantage of responsible packers.

It is unnecessary to say that the above remarks do not apply to canneries which are worked with due capital. The owners of these factories are quite alive to the necessity of stringent protective measures.

"THE POOR FISHERMEN WILL BE RUINED."

This popular cry has no reason to be. Closing the lobster fishery on the 15th July will not injuriously affect the fishermen. Mackerel fishing begins on the 10th or 15th July, and affords abundant employment for all hands. Cod fishing goes on all summer until late in the fall. There is every indication that a profitable fall herring fishery will soon be established on the Island shores. Agricultural labour is in so great a demand that no man need go unemployed.

Females working in lobster factories will take their place in domestic and farm labour where a still greater demand exists for their services.

To the objection that lobster fishermen cannot engage in sea-fishing, because they do not possess the necessary gear, it may be answered that, a supply of hooks, lines and trawls is not expensive, and that merchants who now make advances to lobster fishers would only be too glad to furnish them with sea-fishing material on the same terms.

Lobster factories can be used for other purposes than that of canning lobsters. Large quantities of mackerel are annually so canned. In 1886, 679,584 tins of mackerel were put up in Prince Edward Island. Boneless cod can be prepared, and herring smoked. Salmon, eels, trout, oysters, clams, butcher's meat, game, corn, tomatoes, fruits and berries of all kinds can be preserved in cans, so that the factories need not stand idle, or close their doors, if they do not choose to do so. The stages, wharves, &c., can be made available for sea-fishing, while the buildings and outfit stand ready for the curing and packing of sea-fish. The lobster traps, placed under proper cover, suffer no deterioration and can keep for a long time.