

"Fish are numerous in the Mackenzie, the principal species being that known as the 'Inconnu.' Those caught in the lower river are very good eating, much resembling salmon in taste, being also firm and juicy."

The mines, as I have said, have not been explored in that country, but we know that valuable ores exist in different parts of the territory. Enough is known to convince us that on the head waters of the Peace, Liard and Peel rivers there are from 150,000 to 200,000 square miles which may be considered auriferous. In addition to these auriferous deposits, gold has been found on the west shore of Hudson Bay, and is said to exist in certain portions of the barren grounds. We have also information that salt, sulphur and coal oil are found in that country in immense quantities. But the great wealth of the Mackenzie Basin is its furs, which, as the region is the last great fur preserve of the world, are of very great value, all the finer furs of commerce being found there. The sales in London of furs exported from those Territories amount yearly to several millions of dollars. Consequently, without unduly interfering with the rights of settlers, or the usual privileges of Indians, this great trade should be fostered, and, if possible, made a source of direct revenue to the Dominion. On this subject, I would quote from the report of Mr. Ogilvie to the Department of the Interior some observations he has made on the fur question from what he had noticed during his explorations in that country:

"Owing to excessive competition in the outer or southern parts of the district, the supply of fur is gradually decreasing, both in quantity and quality, or the Indians now kill anything they see at any time in the year, knowing that if one will not buy from them another will. I have known them to break into a beaver house in the month of June, after barring all means of exit, and kill both old and young, though the young were hardly able to crawl about. When there was only one trading company in the Territory such things were not only discouraged but punished, by declining to buy out of season, and refusing to give credit to the Indian guilty of such unnecessary destruction. In this way fur-bearing animals were protected from extermination * * * * * If the present rate of decrease is maintained in the supply of fur, in a few years it will be but little assistance to the Indian as a means of living. Then he will, as far as possible, remove to the vicinity of the settlements, where the public will have to sustain him, and the only business now pursued in the northern part of the Territory will almost cease. The evil will, to a certain extent, work its own cure; for the stoppage of the trade will allow the fur-bearing animals to increase, until it pays white trappers to engage in hunting. Once the Indian becomes assured of a living elsewhere he will resort to the hunting field no more.

"I would respectfully suggest that some method be devised for restricting the indiscriminate slaughter of fur-bearing animals. For the greater part of this slaughter there is no reasonable excuse, as most of the fur-bearing animals are useless as food, or are never eaten (which is the same thing), and protecting them during the breeding season would entail no hardship on any one. To appoint and pay protective officers would probably cost more than the whole business is worth to the country, and the result would likely be a failure. An alternative would be to lease the country to companies in districts large enough, and for terms long enough to make it an object to them to protect the trade and preserve the fur from extermination. The lessees should also enter into bonds not to accept a skin out of season, or one too young, under a heavy penalty for breach of this condition. It would probably be difficult to prove any such breach, but the fear of the penalty and the profit from protecting the trade would, I believe, accomplish all that is desired."

It would be necessary, to protect fur-bearing animals, to compel all strangers coming into that country for hunting and trading purposes to pay a certain duty on each skin when they leave; and strict regulations should be made against the use of poisons, and especially against strychnine, in the capture of such animals as the fox and the wolf. Some protection also should be given to beavers; if not, they will be utterly destroyed before many years—especially if American adventurers are not prohibited from slaughtering them. Some measures should also be adopted with a view to protecting the whale fisheries of our northern waters, and at the same time to derive a revenue from them. We know how American whalers kill them, attacking them with harpoons, explosive bombs and lances, which methods not only destroy the whales with greater certainty, but inspire the survivors with such terror that they disappear from their breeding grounds. My intention in moving this resolution is to call the attention of the Government to the necessity for constituted authority in this country—but that is not all. The great object is to keep the country for ourselves; and I would certainly hold the Government responsible if any trouble should arise in that part of the Dominion. I have endeavored to point out the great natural resources of the Mackenzie Basin, and how far they can be made to contribute to the wealth and importance of the Dominion; yet what have we hitherto done? We try to do as much as we can for Manitoba and the North-West, but the Mackenzie Basin is entirely ignored. Our American neighbors are encroaching on our fishing grounds on the Pacific coast day by day, and they will endeavor to