

Now as to the fish question, large quantities have been taken from the river for many years, and large quantities are still taken from it. The population has largely increased and fishermen have also increased. We do not know that fish have diminished in the river, but while it is possible they have we know of no cause that can be adduced but incessant fishing. We have never heard the settlers along the banks of the river complain or advance in any way the theory that the number of fish has lessened in the stream as a result of putting sawdust in it, but we have frequently heard the assertion made by city people who know nothing whatever of the matter. We do, however, know of our own observation, a means by which we would consider it quite possible that the quantity of fish has been diminished. Years ago there were no fish taken from the stream except by the residents along the river for family use, and by an occasional sportsman; but for several years past a large traffic has been carried on, and is still being carried on, in fishing with nets and selling the fish in the Ottawa market. This, we think, on investigation will prove the means by which the fish supply of the Ottawa River has been lessened, if it is lessened.

As to the question of health, we have frequently heard it asserted that the water of the river was rendered impure and unhealthy as a result of sawdust being allowed to go into the stream. We are unable to deal with the subject scientifically, but we can say with all sincerity that we know of no evidence whatever to justify the assertion that any deleterious effects whatever result from this cause. The village of Rockland, with two thousand inhabitants, gets its water supply from the Ottawa. No doubt many other villages along the stream are similarly situated in this respect, as well as a great number of the farmers, but we have yet to learn of the first case of injury in any respect from drinking Ottawa River water; but otherwise we have always heard it spoken of as being good and wholesome water.

Lastly, as to the danger to life, we have never seen anything of the kind ourselves, but we have heard of explosions whereby quantities of ice have been broken up and thrown into the air, and we have heard it asserted by those opposed to the sawdust question that this was a danger to life, and that these explosions resulted from gases formed from accumulations of sawdust in the bed of the stream. We can offer nothing in reply to this, as we know nothing of the circumstances, but the reports we have heard, excepting this, that we have heard of similar explosions on lakes, where no sawmills or sawdust ever existed.

We have given you our views so far as we can in writing on the four points we mentioned, and none of which in our opinion form any just grounds for complaint. And it is our opinion that no contention exists on this question arising from those engaged in traffic or navigation on the Ottawa River; or from the settlers or occupants on the banks of the river.