

Ontario Fishery Commission.

Concurrent with the depletion of the fisheries the struggle of the fishermen to live begins, greater length of nets are used than allowed by law, and the nets are not lifted so frequently. When lifted, some of the fish will be fresh, others unfit for use as fresh fish are salted, others still worse are used for oil. The less experienced fishermen become embarrassed, and merchants, supply houses, and capitalists from time to time by giving credit and advances of money become interested in this continuance of waste and destruction, as well as illegitimate fishing. There is evidence that there are merchants who will "start any man fishing." An experienced Huron fisherman says he never heard of a gill-net being refused to any applicant. At the present time there are about 1,345 miles of gill-nets licensed for the Huron, Georgian Bay and Manitoulin waters, five times the combined issue for the whole of the rest of Ontario—but even this estimate is far below the real length of nets proved in evidence to be in use in these waters, for it is known that, where a license is issued for 6,000 yards of gill-net, 16,000 and upwards all actually used; and with a license for 24,000 yards, for a tug, it is run up to 40,000 yards and over.

Any restrictive system and one which would cut at the root of inveterate abuses, sanctioned by constant practice and of old date, however well considered, will invariably meet with an opposition difficult if not impossible to control.

The evidence of Mr. Davis of Hamilton, Messrs. Port, Doyle and Bray of Toronto, large fish-dealers of high personal character as well as the best reputation as merchants, is not only the best evidence, from the nature of their business, but it is clear and conclusive of the present waste and destruction of young and immature fish in Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay and other waters.

6.—AMERICANS FISHING IN CANADIAN WATERS.

That the American fishermen trespass in our waters is clear from the evidence. This irregular and illegal fishing is chiefly carried on in Lake Erie, and the lower end of Lake Huron. It is the cause of much discontent and irritation among Canadian fishermen.

Fish in considerable quantities are also purchased direct from Canadian pound and gill-nets fishermen, and taken in tugs direct to American ports without landing or reporting in Canada.

The duty of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cent per lb. intended to be levied on Canadian fish entering the United States is easily and generally avoided—the fish being invoiced by the consignors as fish caught with American nets, and a large percentage of the fresh water fish caught in Canadian waters are thus invoiced. Should any considerable portion be classified as American fish, the American statistics published as to the returns of their fisheries are quite misleading; quantities of Canadian caught fish are actually included in these returns.