

## CHAPTER XI.—THE FISHERIES.

### Section 1.—The Early Fisheries.

Fishing is one of the earliest and most historic industries of Canada. Leaving aside inconclusive evidence in favour of authentic record, one must ascribe to Cabot the honour of having discovered, in 1497, the cod banks of Newfoundland, when he first sighted the mainland of North America. Fishing may well be regarded as the first industry to be systematically prosecuted by Europeans in what is to-day the Canadian domain. It has since yielded a perennial harvest to both Europe and America. According to the Census of 1931, of 3,927,591 persons in Canada gainfully occupied in that year, 34,340 were reported as occupied in the fishing industry, that is, in primary fishing operations exclusive of canning and curing.

A more detailed account of the history of the Atlantic fisheries was given on p. 348 of the 1934-35 Year Book.

### Section 2.—The Canadian Fishing Grounds.

The fishing grounds of the Dominion are of exceptional national value inasmuch as two of the four great sea-fishing areas of the world border on Canada. They fall naturally into three divisions: Atlantic, inland, and Pacific fishing grounds. A detailed description of each division, of the fish caught, and of the methods of fishing, will be found at pp. 222-225 of the 1932 Year Book.

### Section 3.—The Government and the Fisheries.\*

Upon the organization of the Dominion Government at Confederation, the administration of the Canadian fisheries was placed under the Department of Marine and Fisheries. Early in 1930 a Department of Fisheries, in charge of its own Minister, was organized. This Department now administers all the tidal fisheries (except those of the mainland portion of Quebec, which, by agreement, are under provincial administration), the non-tidal fisheries of Nova Scotia, and the fisheries of Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The non-tidal fisheries of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, the Prairie Provinces, and British Columbia, and both the tidal and non-tidal fisheries of Quebec (except the fisheries of the Magdalen islands) are administered by the respective provinces, although the Dominion Department does certain protective work in non-tidal waters of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and British Columbia. The right of fisheries regulation for all the provinces, however, rests with the Dominion Government. [See the Fisheries Act (22-23 Geo. V, c. 42).] The expenditure of the Dominion on the fisheries in the fiscal year 1937-38, including civil government salaries, contingencies, etc., was \$2,162,111 and the revenue \$119,824.

**Conservation.**—River and lake fisheries certainly, and sea fisheries probably, if left to themselves, conform to the economic law of diminishing returns. The Canadian Government, accordingly, has had for a main object the prevention of depletion by the enforcement of close seasons, the forbidding of obstructions and pollutions and the regulation of nets, gear, and fishing operations generally. In

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