

COPY OF REPORT OF PROVINCIAL FISHERY OVERSEERS.

SEPTEMBER 1ST, 1883.

To the Honorable James Mitchell, Surveyor General of the Province of New Brunswick:

SIR,—Pursuant to your instructions of the 16th of July last, we proceeded to examine the Salmon and Trout Fisheries on the following rivers, viz.:—Nepisiguit, Jacquet, Upsalquitch, Kedgwick and Restigouche.

We first visited the Nepisiguit and inspected it from the Rough Waters to the Grand Falls (a distance of about 20 miles). We found a great portion of the Lands from the Indian Reserve to the mouth of the river have been granted and that consequently the Government waters comprised in Mr. Nicholson's lower Lease, viz., from Indian Reserve down, are very limited; there is, however, five good salmon pools within this Lease which we consider would afford good fishing for two rods during the entire season.

From Indian Reserve up to the Grand Falls most of the best fishing grounds have also been granted and are held by private parties; we found, however, within Mr. Nicholson's Lease of this portion of the river thirteen salmon pools, all of which, we are informed, are good at high water and will give good fishing for four rods during the whole season.

Salmon ascend this river early in June as far as the Grand Falls, over which they cannot pass. The best fishing is usually early in the season, but fish continue to run at intervals during the whole summer, especially after a rise of water. The grilse commence to run early in July.

The salmon catch in the river has been unusually and unaccountably small this season, as from the best information we could obtain we believe the river has been well protected for the past two years by Messrs. Nicholson, Adams, Spurr and his associates, all of whom are owners of large and valuable fisheries on the river, and although it is doubtless too soon at present to expect much benefit from this protection, yet from the unusually large run of grilse this season a much greater number of full grown fish may reasonably be expected next summer.

Mr. Nicholson has had one guardian on each of his Leases the whole season and will keep them on the river until the ice forms in the fall. These guardians appear to us to be good men and attentive to their duties.

Mr. Spurr and his associates employ three guardians on their waters from the Pabineau to the Grand Falls.

We consider the river well guarded and protected and that the fishing on it (if the present guardianship is continued) must steadily improve, although the Lessee as well as the private owners on the river complain bitterly of the system of netting as pursued in the harbor and on the coast; they describe the nets used, as in most cases, of nearly a mile in length and skilfully arranged so as to form a series of traps, from which it is impossible for a salmon once striking the net to escape; they state that they have made complaints to the Dominion Fishery Officers at Bathurst, but have been unable to obtain any redress. We consider these nets or traps as described to us to be contrary to law and would recommend that the matter be represented to the Fishery authorities at Ottawa.

We would not recommend any changes in the boundaries of the present Leases on this river.

JACQUET RIVER.

We next visited this river and inspected it from its mouth up to Kettle Pool, a distance of 18 miles, above which the canoeing is very difficult, and we were informed there is no good salmon fishing. At the time of our inspection the water was very low and we had to wade most of the distance while the men dragged the canoes over the shallow places. The pools are small but almost continuous from the mouth up, in many of which we saw salmon, but the water being so low and clear, they would not then rise readily to the fly; we, however, killed two grilse and a number of large trout.

The salmon and trout enter this river early in June, but fresh fish come up with every rise of water.

The Lessee has one guardian employed during the whole season who is constantly upon the river and appears to be much interested in its protection. He only receives (\$80.00) eighty dollars for the season, but acts as guide to fishing parties, which, however, we do not think impairs his efficiency, as in that capacity he visits many of the pools daily and he says he is constantly on the river during the night; he lives close to the river, about 14 miles from its mouth.

We consider it a fair salmon and good trout river, and capable of being much improved. We think another guardian necessary near the mouth of the river, as the settlers are numerous and there are great inducements to illegal fishing. We would not recommend any changes in the boundaries of the present Lease.

We would further report that this river being so easily accessible by rail, with good hotel accommodation near its mouth, a good road to its upper waters, sea-bathing and all the accessories of a delightful summer resort, we consider it a most desirable river to lease. We would, however, recommend the use of log canoes or dugouts as better adapted to the navigation of the river than the bark canoes as now in use.

UPSALQUITCH.

From Jacquet River we went to the Restigouche and proceeded up the Upsalquitch (which empties into the Restigouche on the New Brunswick side about six miles above the Metapedia). We ascended the river a distance of eighteen miles to the forks and thence six miles up the North-west Branch. We found many good looking pools along the whole length of the river and North-west Branch as far as visited by us, and were informed that there was a continuance of good pools for a further distance of fourteen miles. There is a Fall on the South-east Branch about two and one-half miles from the Forks over which the Salmon do not pass; we saw salmon in almost all the pools but, the water being very low and clear, they would not rise readily to the fly. There are two runs of salmon each season on this river, early in June and about the middle of August, at which times we are informed they rise readily to the fly and the fishing is very good. The Lessee complains that by the recent Fishery regulation of the Dominion Government closing this River on the 15th of August he is deprived of his best fishing which is usually from the 15th of August to the 1st September (the time allowed by the old regulation for fly fishing on the Restigouche and its tributaries). The present Lessee employs one guardian; we consider another necessary for the proper protection of the river, as there are in all nearly forty miles of water to guard, and there are several portage roads by which, we are informed, poachers approach the river and sweep the pools with net and spear.

We would recommend that in future the river be divided as follows: 1st, From the mouth up to the Forks; and 2nd, from the Forks up, including both Branches.

This is a first-rate looking river for salmon, and from the best information we could obtain, we are led to believe that there is good fishing early and again late in the season, but at the time of our inspection the first run of fish had passed up to the head of the river and the second had not yet come in, besides which the water was then too low and clear for good fishing. We believe that at the above seasons each section of the river, if divided as recommended, would afford good fishing for at least three rods.

PATAPEDIA.

This river empties into the Restigouche on the Quebec side and forms

part of the boundary between that Province and New Brunswick up to the 48th parallel of latitude. It is a small river and at the time of our visiting the Restigouche the water was low and canoeing on the Petapelia very difficult. We did not go up it, not having been specially instructed so to do and the time at our disposal being limited (as the fishing closes on the 15th of August on all the Restigouche tributaries), but from the information received we are led to believe that large numbers of salmon annually ascend this river and are taken with the fly. We would recommend an early inspection of its capabilities, and that, if leased before such inspection, the Lease be for only one year, as it would not probably bring a high price until better known.

KEDGWICK.

This river empties into the Restigouche from the north side about fifty-six miles above the Metapelia. We ascended it a distance of twenty-two miles, above which the water is very rapid for about five miles, when it again becomes easy poling, with some dead water up to the lakes, up to which the salmon pass, but we were informed that they again come down later in the season and spawn on the gravel beds in the rapid water; on the upper waters they do not readily take the fly. We found numerous good pools along the whole distance inspected by us and saw salmon in most of them; we were informed by the guides that the best run of fish is from the middle of June to the first of July and then again about the first of September. At these seasons large numbers of fish pass up to the upper waters and they then take the fly readily and the fishing is exceedingly good. Great numbers of large trout pass up early in the season, when they afford good sport. When we visited the river (about the 10th of August), the water was low and very clear; the salmon had been some time in the pools and were dull and sluggish, consequently but few rose to the fly. From the best information we could obtain we are of opinion that from early in June to the 15th of July the fishing is excellent.

It is contended by the present Lessee and some other fishermen on the river that it is a mistaken policy on the part of the Government to lease the Kedgwick, as it is the great spawning ground for the Restigouche. In this contention we cannot concur, for although we believe it to be the principal spawning ground, yet the fish taken with the fly during the short fishing season will never materially lessen the number left to spawn, while the protection afforded by the river being occupied by the Lessee will to a great extent prevent spearing and netting, and thus far more than compensate for the few fish taken by him. We believe that the leasing of the river will ensure its best protection.

The Quebec boundary line crosses this river about thirty-eight miles from its mouth. The Dominion Government has one guardian on the river; he

lives at its mouth. Poachers must pass him to go up the river, and there is no other way by which they can reach its waters unless from Ransomky, by which latter route we are informed a few trappers approach the upper waters and do a little spearing late in the season, not, however, to any great extent, as there is no road and the distance is too great to allow them to carry away any fish they may catch.

The present Lessee (Mr. Halstead) has had two guardians employed on this river and the waters included in his lease from the mouth of the Kedwick down to Tracy's Brook; these he will keep on the river until the 1st of November; they appear to be good and efficient men. Mr. Halstead is the riparian proprietor of several good pools below the mouth of the Kedwick. We would not recommend any change in the boundaries of the Lease of this river.

RESTIGOUCHE.

We carefully examined this river from the mouth of the Upsalquitch to about nine miles above the County line. From the Upsalquitch down the banks are all granted, and also from the County line up. We found almost a continuation of good pools up to the mouth of the Kedwick, in most of which we saw salmon, and having been kindly invited by the Restigouche Salmon Club and the several other Lessees on the river to fish in their waters, we caught several fine salmon, some of which weighed upwards of 30 pounds. The season, however, at the time of our visit being far advanced, the salmon were dull and sluggish and did not rise so readily to the fly as we were informed they do earlier in the summer; the best fishing is in June and the early part of July. There has been a much larger run of salmon this season than known for many years, this we attribute to the better protection the river has received for the past few years, and to the young fish placed in its waters from the hatchery of Mr. Stewart.

From the mouth of the Kedwick up to the forks of the Restigouche, a distance of about sixteen miles, there are many good pools in most of which we saw salmon but (as in the rest of the river) they were slow to rise. We were, however, credibly informed that the salmon fishing in this portion of the river is exceedingly good in June and the early part of July when the fish are fresh run and the water higher and not so clear; we killed quantities of large trout and the supply seemed inexhaustible and we were informed that late in the season parties of men come over from the Malouin and Green River by the wagon pass down the Restigouche to the Kedwick which they ascend, sweeping both rivers with nets and spears when the fish are on the spawning beds, causing immense damage to the fishing on both rivers. We would recommend the immediate appointment of a guardian at the forks of the Restigouche; he could then ascend either branch when nec-

Wm?

From report for
Crown Lands Dept
Sept 11/1883 from
Prov. Fishery Overseer

I suspect this was
from a hatchery (?) at
Deer side. When the
Flat lands hatchery
was built I haven't
been able to discover
I have a picture of my
grand mother taken
sometime during 1st World
war. Ales was probably
the 1st Superintendent and
followed by William (my
grand father). My father was
retiring in their foot steps
hatchery in 1960.