

**102.—PROPOSED LIMITATION OF THE HERRING FISHERY IN MAINE, AND ITS EFFECTS UPON BAIT AND CANNING INTERESTS.**

**By R. E. EARLL.**

[From a letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

Permit me to call your attention to the following extract from a letter which I have received from Mr. Henry S. Menann, dated New York City, January 24, 1883. He says:

"There is a movement on foot at present to induce the legislature of Maine to pass a law to limit the canning of herring to eight months in the year, so that factories will be closed from December 15 to April 15. I have often expressed the wish to have such a law enacted, and am very glad that steps are being taken to secure it. General T. D. Leavitt, of Eastport, has the matter in hand. The reasons why the law should be passed may be briefly summed up as follows:

"1. The quality of the fish in the winter months is too poor for canning purposes.

"2. The fish are mostly brought in in bad condition.

"3. Half of the fish are too small and are turned into pomace.

"4. It would stop the driving of herring, which is a very destructive practice.

"5. The winter months are not suited for canning fish successfully.

"6. The demand for canned fish is very light in winter, and as there is usually an overstock on the markets in December the attempts of greedy packers to pack fish in the winter months keeps the markets in a feverish state.

"7. The packing of poor quality fish badly hurts the industry.

"8. Nature herself opposes the taking of these fish in the winter by increasing the difficulties of their catch.

"9. Only greedy packers will undertake to pack in winter; honorable parties in the business close their factories invariably in December and do not start up until latter part of April.

"10. To pack herring eight months in the year is entirely sufficient to supply the markets and then have an overstock.

"I think these are all good reasons why the law should be enacted, and I have no doubt that you will so consider them."

The bait question is not affected in the least by the proposed legislation. Fully 95 per cent. of all the herring taken for bait during the winter months are caught in nets. Those taken in weirs at this season are usually too small to be sold to the "frozen-herring-dealers."

But, further, the law will not prevent the fishing of weirs, and any of those who may be anxious to secure bait for shore fishing can still visit them and seine out as many as may be needed, leaving the remainder to escape at high water. If the weirs are not fished (and if

the sardine canneries are closed, it will seldom be found desirable to fish them) the gates can be left open and the fish can escape as easily as they enter.

The principal point in favor of the proposed law is, I think, found in the fact that the small herring are very poor during the winter months, and those canned at that time, being of inferior quality, seriously injure the reputation of American sardines. If the Maine canners would buy only good fish and pack them in better oil the prejudice against "herring sardines" would soon wholly disappear, and the demand for them would be greatly increased.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 30, 1883.*

### 103.—SHAD WORK IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

By C. J. HUSKE.

[From a letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

In March our attention was directed to the shad station on the Edisto River. Last season we constructed a rough frame building at the base of a small pond fed by springs from the neighboring hills. The tin hatching cones were fed by surface water at an elevation of 10 feet. This season we added two glass hatching jars, thus making the capacity 2,000,000 per week.

Shad fishing begins on the Edisto River early in January and continues until the first of April. Between 35 and 40 gill-nets are employed in a distance of 8 miles and just within tide water. They average to catch 350 fish per net. Shad fishing is done between the night tides and mostly after midnight. During the day the water is so very clear as to render gill-nets unavailing.

We rarely, if ever, find ripe eggs. A large number of shad were handled in a half-ripe condition. The eggs when forced came in clots. A large per cent. were apparently ripe and were impregnated on coming in contact with the milt. The greater number, however, had no appearance of being ripe, were small, hard, and perfectly white. We succeeded in obtaining a small number of eggs and planted 440,000 fry in the Edisto. I visited the Savannah River at Augusta and the North Fork of the Edisto River during the month of April, and found the catch very small. The 500,000 fry which I procured from you in May were planted in Broad River at the Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line Railroad crossing. These were in fine condition when released, the loss in transportation not exceeding 3,000. Active operations in this State have been going on for so short a time that the results are as yet comparatively small, but the enthusiasm of our citizens is widespread.

COLUMBIA, S. C., *June 1, 1882.*