

has gone over rapids and jumped many falls, and when it is exhausted and is looking for a pool in order to lay its eggs, or if a male, to fecundate them, gentlemen with hooks and lines are then ready to catch that fish for mere sport, and thus destroy thousands and hundreds of thousands of eggs, which if left alone, would produce hundreds of thousands of salmon to enrich the country. If you allow the fly-fishers to go on as they have done during the past fifteen or twenty years, fishing after the net fishers, they will soon deplete the rivers of the salmon entirely. I hope the Government will make this law as stringent as possible against the fly-fishers. I am not opposed to fly-fishing or sport of any kind, but sport must be carried on in such a way as not to injure any trade or industry. I have a reproach to make, not against this Government, but against past Governments, with regard to the salmon fisheries. Some ten or fifteen years ago fly-fishers came on the coast, some from England, some from the United States, and some from this country, and I have seen poor fishermen turned away from a river where they had got their living for years, in order to allow gentlemen to enjoy their sport in that river. We are a people of liberty and equality, we have no aristocracy, and no landlords, and we do not want landlords, in this country. If you go along the coasts and talk to the fishermen, you will hear them speaking against the Government—not the present Government, but past Governments—for giving the rivers to gentlemen for a few hundred dollars. One of the rivers of Gaspé was given to one gentleman for \$200 or \$300, and he managed to make about \$1,000 a year by sub letting. I may be asked why I have not brought these matters up before. I would have done so, but I should not have been heard, as the fly-fishers were stronger than I; but now I can speak before this august tribunal—I can speak before the country on this question. If this House does not take strict precaution against the destruction of our salmon fisheries, they will go on decreasing from year to year to such an extent that they will come to nothing, as they have come to nothing in the United States. Now, I will ask that the licenses be confined to river fisheries, because I maintain that sea fisheries should be free to all fishermen without licenses. I believe that nine years is too long a period for leases or licenses; I think five years is long enough, as the Government usually make these grants to friends and favorites, I hope the Government will take steps to prevent the destruction of our river fisheries. The Local Governments and the riparian owners will, no doubt, try to make as much money as they can out of their salmon fisheries by giving as many permits for fly-fishing as they can, because they are not interested in the net-fishing, which are leased, and the money for which goes into the Federal Treasury. The Local Governments will try and get their fees from the fly-fishers, and if this goes on the depletion will continue in the salmon fisheries. I hope the Government will bring in a law by which the close time for fly-fishing will be assimilated to that of net-fishing; for I tell you it is the granting of prolonged time for fly-fishing that is the main cause of the destruction of the salmon.

Mr. DAWSON. Our inland fisheries are extremely important, especially on the great Lakes Superior and Huron. But they are very easily exhausted, and this Bill, so far as it goes, is an excellent Bill, because it will have a tendency to protect these fisheries. This stringent clause to which the hon. member for St. John objects will apply very well, I think, to the great lakes. Of course, with such an extent of fisheries from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the same rules may not apply to all, but in the great lakes it is highly important that stringent rules should be adopted to prevent fishermen using undersized mesh nets. On the American side of these great lakes the fish are almost exterminated

through the use of small meshes, but the fisheries on our side, are, as yet, pretty well preserved. On the Georgian Bay the fisheries are becoming exhausted as on Lakes Erie and Ontario, but on Lake Superior and the upper parts of Lake Huron, on the British side, we still have abundance of fish. The provisions in this Bill will likely, if properly enforced, result in the preservation of our fish to a great extent, and the fishery officers should be compelled to see that the law is enforced.

Mr. WELDON. I call the attention of the Committee to a resolution which was passed in the Local Legislature of New Brunswick at its last sitting, and was moved by the leader of the Government and seconded by the leader of the Opposition:

"Whereas, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries has introduced into the House of Commons a Bill entitled 'An Act further to amend the Fishery Act,' which Act, with the amendments proposed to be made in Committee of the Whole, contain provision prohibiting riparian proprietors exercising their right to fish for salmon above tidal wave by any apparatus whatever, without a license from the Minister of Marine and Fisheries to fish at a certain time or in a certain mode; and

"Whereas, in the opinion of this House, such legislation is not necessary for the protection of the fisheries, and will injuriously affect the value of the fishing rights, the property of this Province, also the rights of Provincial proprietors; and

"Whereas, such legislation is in direct course with the decisions of the Supreme Court of the Province, and of the Supreme Court of Canada; therefore

"Resolved, That this House would approve of the Government bringing under the notice of the Minister of Justice, the objections entertained in the Province to the proposed legislation, and providing against such legislation by the Parliament of Canada as an interference with the rights of the Province and the inhabitants thereof."

A copy of this was forwarded to the Department of Justice, to show the views taken by our Province.

Mr. McISAAC. I would like to ask the acting Minister of Marine and Fisheries, what scale of fees chargeable for licenses is especially as regards fishing along the sea coast?

Mr. BOWELL. That is a matter of regulation.

Mr. McISAAC. It is necessary that this matter should be attended to immediately. During last Session a discussion took place on this subject. It was shown that, great as the hardship was in exacting licenses for salmon fishing along the coast, greater was the hardship arising from the mode in which the fees were charged. The hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries then intimated that licenses would be abolished altogether, or granted free of charge. I expected to see either change made in this Bill. I went in the beginning of the Session to the proper authorities, and found no change was made. The only purpose the Government can have in view in exacting these licenses, must be to make revenue. It cannot be simply the protection of the fisheries, for free licenses would not interfere with that purpose, as a person could be punished without making him pay for a license. The salmon fisheries seem to be singled out for the special disfavor of the Government. The outfit for a salmon fisher along the coast costs from \$200 to \$400, and this year an additional tax of 10 per cent. is imposed on cordage, which is a considerable tax in view of that cost, and these fishermen are excluded from sharing in the bounty. Some protection may arise as far as the rivers are concerned, but along the sea coast it is no protection. As far as the sea coast is concerned, I hope the licenses will be granted free, or a regular fixed system of fees established. As the law is now, an arbitrary authority is given to the fishery officer, who may charge what he likes, just as he likes or dislikes the applicant. I do not mean to cast a reflection upon any official, but I know that in Nova Scotia complaints have been made that the fishery officer may charge what he likes for a license. I hope that an Order in Council may soon be issued restraining these officers in the arbitrary exercise of their power, so that that body of fishermen may not be