

great many people there, and he will raise a storm to which he will be obliged to yield very quickly. If the people of Nova Scotia are to be prohibited from catching salmon with nets except in tidal waters, it will be simply outrageous. On the River St. Mary's, for instance, on which I live, the people fish for salmon very largely with nets. Is this law to prevent them from catching salmon at all? I think it is a most outrageous proposal.

Mr. TUPPER. The outrage is largely imaginary. The object of the legislation is in favor of the Province that the hon. gentleman thinks will be so affected, because everyone who has a knowledge of salmon fishing is aware that the salmon, on their way to the spawning beds, should not be met by nets. It was a complete surprise to the department to find that the Act had been construed at that late day in the manner that it was, and the department had acted previously on an entirely different idea, holding that they had always been able, from the time the Act was passed, to prevent injury to the salmon fishery. There is only one opinion among all those conversant with the proper means of preserving these fisheries, and that is, that it is simply destruction for the salmon fishery to net them in the non-tidal waters and in the rivers where the salmon go for spawning. There is not a word of complaint from any of the Provinces with the course that has been taken, and I venture to say that if any other course was adopted, wherever the people enjoy the benefit of the present restrictions, there would be a great outcry against it. I may remind the hon. gentleman that his idea upon the subject may, on reflection, be considered not well founded, because there was not a dissenting voice in Parliament against this very clause when it was passed in 1883. The moment the fact was brought to the attention of the Government that that construction had been placed upon the Fisheries Act, Parliament, without demur, passed those very sections in the Bill to which I allude, and when the Bill went to the Senate, other clauses, dealing with other matters, were added to it, and when the Bill was returned to this House it was dropped. All I propose is to adopt that clause which was necessary, in the opinion of every official in the department, for the protection of the salmon industry in all the Provinces, and to which Parliament itself has already agreed.

Mr. ELLIS. It appears to me that the object of this legislation is to drive out the fishermen who earn their living, for the benefit of the fly-fishermen. The fact is that the whole legislation of the country, with regard to the salmon fisheries, is for the benefit of the rich men, and the people who buy up certain portions of land, and hold them, as against the industry of the country, and the sooner public opinion compels you to put a stop to that kind of thing the better. These fly-fishermen, these rich men, have got complete possession of the department over which the hon. gentleman presides, in so far as this matter is concerned. Now, what does he propose to do? He proposes to close the St. John River, which is 300 miles long, and 200 miles of which, I think, are within the frontiers of Canada—he proposes to close it entirely against net fishermen, against men who are riparian owners, a river upon which not a single salmon is taken by the fly. Now, you propose to drive these men out of their occupation. Why should men on the Bay of Fundy, in the tidal waters, be allowed to catch salmon, and a man 50 miles up the river not be allowed to do the same thing? I call the attention of the member for Sunbury, of the member for Queen's, of the member for King's, to this Bill. It is certainly an attack upon the industry of men who get their living by fishing, and it is done simply in the interest of the rich men. It is this kind of legislation that is creating socialism throughout the country, and is the very worst legislation which you can pass.

Mr. KIRK.

Mr. WELDON (St. John). I think the case my hon. friend refers to, was a case on the Restigouche River. I was going to call the attention of the Minister to the River St. John. There are valuable fisheries on that river about 12 or 13 miles from the mouth, and further up the river in the county represented by the Minister of Finance, where, if this Act is carried into force, it will utterly destroy those fisheries. The effect of this will be entirely to prevent any fishing in the River St. John. I quite agree with the remarks of the hon. member for the city of St. John (Mr. Ellis), that it would deprive the fishermen of the means of getting their living.

Mr. TUPPER. Does not the hon. gentleman see the force of the argument presented by the fishery inspectors, that the supply of salmon would be slowly decreased, as it is decreasing, in the tidal waters of the coasts, if these fish are netted on their way to the spawning ground? It seems to me a matter of a very few years when, if we allow that style of fishing to go on, the salmon fishery will become a thing of the past.

Mr. WELDON (St. John). I remember last year the salmon fishery was very profitable.

Mr. TUPPER. There is a large decrease.

Mr. ELLIS. The best answer to the hon. gentleman that can be given are the figures of his own department. He will see, if he takes the trouble to examine them, that there is no decrease in the salmon fishery on the St. John River. One year is better than another, but there is a large quantity taken on the river from the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, I might say up the river, above tidal waters, to the entrance of the Tobique, and the head waters of the St. John River. There is no fly-fishing on the main river, yet the hon. gentleman proposes to stop people from net fishing who have carried it on for years. It is an outrage of the worst kind. The hon. gentleman does not know the character of the legislation which he proposes to this House.

Mr. KIRK. I hope the Minister will consider this matter before he passes a law like this. It is quite clear, as the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Ellis) has said, that this law is entirely in the interest of fly-fishermen. He intends to prevent the poor people, farmers and fishermen, from catching even the salmon for their own tables. There are quite a number of farmers who set out nets in the rivers in order to obtain fresh fish for their own use, men who cannot afford to take time to catch salmon with a fly, and this is to be stopped entirely in the interest of the fly-fishermen. There is the St. Mary's River, which is not so large as the St. John River, but yet there are large lakes in it in which fishermen set their nets to catch salmon.

Mr. TUPPER. Does the hon. gentleman refer to the point where the water is non-tidal?

Mr. KIRK. Yes.

Mr. TUPPER. How far above the tide?

Mr. KIRK. Perhaps 10 or 15 miles. There are lakes in the St. Mary's River in which farmers set their nets in season and catch salmon, yet here we are to have them stopped altogether. It is an outrage on these people that they should be stopped from catching salmon in the proper season.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). I would ask the Minister whether he might not be compelled to violate that law in taking salmon for the hatcheries. I do not know how they will get salmon otherwise.

Mr. TUPPER. That is a fruitful subject of discussion, but we will take the power to-day for the purpose of re-