

prevented is unwise fishing, such as wholesale slaughter by netting and otherwise. But to deprive settlers along the waters of the right to take, in a comparatively harmless way, sufficient for their own use is to interfere with an almost natural right. I hope the Minister of Marine and Fisheries has, since this matter was up a couple of weeks ago, seen his way to grant relief to the section of country to which I refer. Whilst we are interested in the proper preservation of fish it seems to me that these regulations might be so modified as to permit comparatively harmless modes of fishing.

Mr. McLELAN. The hon. gentleman who has moved for the correspondence has not overstated the value of the fisheries in the North-West. The view that we took of this matter was that it was unwise strictly to apply the rules and regulations in the case of the settlers in the North-West, the same as they are applied in the older Provinces. I considered that the settlers going into that new country would, perhaps, have to depend largely upon the catch of fish for their subsistence for some considerable time, and therefore I thought it best to go slowly and cautiously in the enforcement of the Act. But the time has now arrived when some measure of protection should be given to the fish in the waters of the North-West, and I have selected a general officer for the Province of Manitoba and such portions of the North-West as may be allotted to him, and another officer for the Qu'Appelle district; I propose gradually to enforce the regulations in those districts where we may judge it desirable. The hon. gentleman will understand that throughout the length and breadth of this Dominion the close season for fishing varies very much; and that what would be a proper course with respect to Ontario would be improper with regard to the North-West. The Government will obtain information and endeavor to adopt the proper time in each case as the close season. In regard to Lake Simcoe, I may say that last season very large petitions were presented to the Department asking that that lake be set apart for the propagation of fish, on the ground that it had been over-fished and the supply considerably depleted. Acting on the prayer of those petitions an Order in Council was passed, and the lake was set apart for a certain period for fish-breeding purposes. Applications have been made since that time to allow certain parties to fish in the lake merely for domestic purposes. I do not know how far that can be done without leaving the permission liable to be abused. I am making enquiries into the matter, and if it can be possible to allow residents on the lake shore to fish simply for their own use, I see no objections to that being allowed, because I do not suppose that would be done to any extent to greatly interfere with the purpose for which the lake is set apart.

Mr. MULOCK. The hon. Minister will remember that, since the Order in Council has been in force, permits have been granted to fish during the summer. It seems impossible to understand how, if it was legal to grant permits to fish during the summer, it is illegal to grant permits to fish during the winter.

Mr. McLELAN. I am not prepared to say for what purpose permits have been granted. I do not know what the local officer may have granted, contrary to orders, or because he was not informed in time that the lake had been set apart for fish-breeding purposes, I will make enquiries.

Mr. HESSON. It was not my wish in any way to prevent a settler from obtaining such quantity of fish as he might require for family use. But I pointed out that quantities to the extent of twenty-five tons in one case had been contracted for between November and December.

Mr. WATSON. I hope the remarks made by the hon. member for North York (Mr. Mulock) will receive the attention of the Minister.

Mr. MULOCK.

tion of the Minister and that settlers will not be prevented from taking a reasonable amount of fish for their own use. I am not very well posted as regards the spawning season; but I was informed that with respect to the white fish in Lake Manitoba, fishing could be allowed one month later than at present. The Minister, no doubt, will know the proper season, and will look into the matter. I hope that the privilege of the settler to catch fish for his own use will not be overruled.

Mr. CAMERON (Middlesex). I think there are some neighborhoods in Ontario which will be very glad to know that the Department of Marine and Fisheries is exercising some control over fishing in those sections. I know of one place, where the fishing is supposed to be of some magnitude, which only knows of the existence of fishery inspectors when the departmental reports show that they have drawn their salaries. There have been frequent complaints, I am given to understand, made to those fishery inspectors in regard to dams in that particular locality, but no attention has been paid to those complaints by the inspectors. Whether the representations have reached the Department or not, I am not prepared to say. I am glad to have this opportunity of drawing the attention of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries to the fact that in one or two sections of western Ontario very serious complaints have been made, and persistently made, in reference to the obstructions of rivers by dams and other obstacles, thus preventing free fishing in those waters that would otherwise be afforded to the people of those localities.

Mr. ALLEN. A great many complaints have been made by the fishermen on Georgian Bay and Lake Huron. In regard to the use of pound-nets I would recommend the Minister to make enquiry among the fishermen who work on these lakes and others connected with the fishing business. It appears pound-nets are the great cause of complaint. The legal size of gill-nets is five inches, through which small fish pass and only the large ones are taken, while those pound-nets, I understand, are in some cases only 2 or 2½ inches. The fishermen of course complain of the advantage given to those using pound-nets, who catch all sizes of fish and destroy more young fish in a single pound-net than ten miles of gill-nets. I ask the Department to make enquiries into this matter from the parties interested, those who are thoroughly acquainted with the importance of the fishing business in those waters, and I believe the Department will obtain information of very general interest and advantage to the fisheries of the Province.

Mr. EDGAR. As the discussion has taken a somewhat wide range, I want to put in a word for a class of fish not alluded to here—the speckled trout, the beautiful *salmo fontinalis*. I am sure there is scarcely a county in Ontario where there are not streams which were once stocked with this beautiful and useful fish. If the inspectors, under the Minister's direction, would pay some attention to prevent people taking those fish off their spawning beds, a great boon would be done to the country. I also think that sportsmen and proprietors of farms all through the country would deem it to be of great advantage if the Government would take care to have some of the best streams restocked with spawn or the young of speckled trout. That fish is a great source of pleasure and delightful sport to great numbers of people, and if it was thoroughly protected it would increase the food supply of the country. This is a matter which does not appeal to the House so prominently as the great fishing interests of the tidal waters or the great lakes and rivers, but it is a matter which appeals to hundreds and thousands of people in the different Provinces.

Mr. HILLIARD. I cannot altogether agree with the remarks of the hon. member for North York (Mr. Mulock) that the restrictions in regard to fishing should be with-