

formed as to the nature of the suggestions made?

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. I suppose—yes, I will.

Mr. E. B. OSLER (West Toronto). As the minister proposes to bring in a Bill regarding fisheries, I would draw his attention to the fact that under the present system of licensing, salmon fishing in the rivers of Quebec and New Brunswick is practically being destroyed. This government is spending large sums of money every year for the purpose of increasing the fish in these rivers and protecting them. As a matter of fact, as the law stands, fish are decreasing in these rivers year after year. I can speak from my own experience, and I know it is the experience of all those who fish, that there is no salmon caught in the Restigouche, or in many other of the eastern rivers, that is not damaged by having his back fin practically cut off. Nine out of ten of the fish are so damaged as to show they have struggled to get through the nets and have been torn in getting through. If the government would do away with the fish-breeding altogether and take a little advice as to how these rivers should be protected, there would be more fish in those rivers ten times over, yes, fifty times over, than there are now. The nets, as I understand it, ought to be taken up over Sunday. As a matter of fact, they are not taken up. The nets in the mouth of the Restigouche are weighted nets, which, as I understand, is against the law; and they are not taken up from weeks' end to weeks' end. No salmon comes up that river without being damaged to such an extent that it is a melancholy thing to see a fish caught there by the fishermen who pay so much for the privilege of fishing and spend so much money in that district. If the government would investigate and have a report as to the condition of the sporting rivers, they would make a very material alteration in the licenses.

Mr. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX (Gaspé). Probably the hon. gentleman (Mr. Osler) is not aware that, so far as the province of Quebec at least is concerned, and I think the same is true of the other provinces, the salmon fisheries have been under the control of the provincial government since the judgment of the Privy Council. As regards the salmon fishery in the province of Quebec, and the New Brunswick and Gaspé Peninsula, the fish are better protected than ever before. The number of licenses has been decreased, and I must say that, through the great care of the commissioner of lands, forests and fisheries of the province of Quebec, the salmon fishery is becoming more and more important, because the fish are better protected and the license fees are higher. I have the honour to represent a county where salmon is plentiful, and perhaps the best in the world, notwithstanding

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax).

what may be said by our friends from British Columbia, yet I have not previously heard it said that the salmon fishery is not increased and is not better protected than ever before.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

RESIGNATION OF THE HON. MR. BLAIR.

On the Orders of the Day being called,

The PRIME MINISTER (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier). I have to inform the House that the Hon. Mr. Blair has tendered his resignation as a member of the cabinet and Minister of Railways, and that His Excellency the Governor General, who has been acquainted with the facts, has been pleased to accept his resignation. The ministerial explanations which are usually given in such cases will probably be given on Thursday next.

HON. MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND THE MILITIA ACT.

Mr. A. C. BELL (Pictou). Before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, I would like to have the attention of the right hon. gentleman. I see by a special to the Montreal 'Herald' from London, this statement:

Hon. Mr. Chamberlain has been invited by the Canadian government to discuss certain proposed amendments to the Canadian Militia Act. It is understood that these deal with the subject of appointing a Canadian commanding officer.

Might I ask the right hon. gentleman if he can confirm this statement, or if he has anything to say with reference to it?

The MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE (Hon. Sir Frederick Borden). In answer to the hon. gentleman, I have to say that a short time ago the Hon. Mr. Chamberlain intimated that as he understood a militia Bill was to be put through the House, he would be glad if the Minister of Militia could, after the close of the present session, go to England and discuss the matter with him and with the Secretary of State for War. The First Minister has intimated his willingness that that should be done.

PRIVILEGE—THE COUNTY OF ELGIN AND THE REDISTRIBUTION.

Mr. A. B. INGRAM (East Elgin). Before the Orders of the Day are called, I rise to a question of privilege. The 'Globe' of Saturday last, July 11, 1903, contains the following report concerning the 'Division of Elgin':

There were four propositions before the committee with regard to Elgin. One proposition was to put St. Thomas as a whole in West Elgin; a second to divide it by the London and Port Stanley Railway east and west; the third to