

fect regulations. The report sets out the representation which has been made to the United States Administration through the different states, and I will not longer refer to that. This report, criticizing Mr. Wilmot's suggestions, says :

"He has, however not dealt with two aspects of the question, which must certainly enter largely into its consideration before a satisfactory conclusion can be reached. The first is that to adopt a system of pound-net fishing to the exclusion of gill-nets would throw the business of fishing into the hands of extensive operators and capitalists—"

The hon. member for West Lambton has inveighed to-day against a man of whom I know but little, Mr. Gauthier, who is an extensive operator, and who would no doubt benefit largely if these views were adopted.—

—"and as a result paralyse that branch of the industry carried on by means of gill-nets, and in which the aggregate capital invested amounts to a very large sum, beside throwing out of employment a considerable number of our population who now fish for a living by means of gill-nets."

Then the difference in opinion as to pound-nets and gill-nets is given, and it is stated that a well equipped pound-net with boat, new, ready to set, costs \$1,000, while a fisherman can equip himself with a boat and a quantity of gill-nets for \$500. Another important feature has been pointed out by the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Macdonell) who is so well able to speak with reference to Georgian Bay, and that is, that it would practically put a stop to their fishing altogether, as you require a certain bottom for the stationary engines known as the pound-nets. There they are staked and fixed, whereas with the gill-nets they can fish over any bottom, and, as a rule, they fish in deep water where the pound-net cannot be used at all. We also met with another difficulty mentioned in the report, appended to Mr. Wilmot's report, a difficulty, however, with which he deals very ably. That is the difficulty that the different overseers and such men as would certainly testify, if a commission were issued, hardly agree upon anything. That is the universal experience. Look at all the commissions in England which have been issued in late years and past times, and it is a remarkable fact that when they have gone to the fishing localities and asked the men of experience, who would be supposed to have studied the matter very thoroughly, it is found impossible to obtain from them any system or any line of action upon which they will all agree. Each fisherman has his own way and ideas, and, as a rule, it has been found almost impossible to obtain from them any definite opinion upon which legislation can be based. Take the history of lobster legislation on the coast. The regulations have the merit of being according to theoretical ideas in this regard. They follow on the lines of experienced officers who, in other countries, have dealt with the subject, but it was remarkable, under that commission, that it was impossible, not merely to obtain any general line of action supported by the fishermen themselves, but by men who have had the greater advantages of travel and education. I refer to the capitalists and the factories. They all disagreed as to what should be done. So we find the position is surrounded with difficulties. The discussion to-day will no doubt be of assistance to us in arriving at a proper conclusion. I have not yet had an opportunity of considering the results of the deliberations of the chief officers of the fishery districts who met here a

Mr. TUPPER.

short time ago to discuss such matters as these. The hon. member for Lambton alluded to the value of our fisheries, and it is encouraging to know, that notwithstanding these inventions and notwithstanding the ingenuity of the fishermen in finding out every year more accurately the haunts of the fish and the best means of catching them, the fisheries of Ontario are of almost untold wealth, and the value of the fish caught is increasing year by year, and that, notwithstanding the regulations that may be imposed by the country to the south of us, there is an enormous amount of money made out of our fish. With reference to the revenue, while it is large, because year after year the operations are extended and licenses increase, and, I may add, owing also to greater vigilance exercised and more fines imposed, the revenue collected is not collected with the mere object of obtaining a revenue. The hon. gentleman alluded by way of contrast to the much smaller revenue in the Maritime Provinces, where the expense is almost equally great, but I may mention this fact that the license system does not obtain in Nova Scotia, except in so far as it is necessary for the same purposes, as in the case of inland waters, with regard to trap-nets for mackerel and so on. There the fee is imposed, not for revenue purposes, but in order to prevent too many applications and applications not *bond fide* being made. The feeling in those districts is that the time is not yet come when we can impose any license on coast fisheries or the inshore fisheries, as restriction of fishing will not increase the number of fish annually visiting our shores. Their haunts are far off and unknown, and it by no means follows that if we are very careful in restricting fishing to certain licensed individuals, that those fish would not be taken by the different competitors from Newfoundland and the United States and elsewhere. Consequently the revenue is a mere bagatelle; but, nevertheless, there is protection by the enforcement of the law with reference to rivers and inland streams, not so valuable as those west but covering considerable extent of territory. The department, I know, is in a position to be very adversely criticized, because this question is one which presents great difficulties, not merely in this country but in all other countries, owing to the desire, elsewhere as well as here, to interfere as little as possible with the fishermen, and to move cautiously with regard to this unknown science as to how far we should enforce prohibitory legislation. With reference to Lake St. Clair, as I have explained across the House, in answer to questions, I have continued the policy that I found in force when I took charge of the department. The wisdom of it is fairly open to criticism. We state in the report that an effort has been made not to increase these pound-nets. So far, I am not aware that I have infringed upon the rule. In referring to Lake St. Clair, it was shown that the licenses were not more than they were in 1885; and if I could enforce my my own wishes in that respect, I would restrict them to a considerable extent. The difficulty in dealing with that water is that the regulations are not enforced on the other side. The argument often addressed to me to permit fishing, even in the close season, there, is that no such season is observed on the other side. With reference to another very important subject, which would occupy a great deal of time, if it were thoroughly threshed out,