

the commodities to sell, his property. Neither is it the intention, under this Bill, to take from the riparian proprietor any right he possesses in law to the soil or bed of the river. The only object of the Government is, by the provisions of this law, to try and regulate the mode and manner of taking the fish, and to protect them at certain seasons. If a riparian proprietor declines to take out a license, then he fishes in the river at those seasons when it is lawful to fish; but the object he should have in obtaining a license would be to bring the power and authority of the law to bear in assisting him to protect his property, and in doing so to preserve the fish from total destruction. That is the interpretation of the law officers of the Crown, and the interpretation of the Department under the decision given by the Superior Court, and the regulations will be in accordance with these views.

Mr. FORTIN. From the tenor of the remarks made by the acting Minister, I am inclined to believe that it is not the intention of the Government to limit the time for fly-fishing. These strangers, the fly-fishers, do not bring much money into the country—of course they pay their board, and people to take them out in canoes; but I have been for thirty-three years on that coast, and know that they do not spend there much money. I am afraid that the Government is not posted as to what has taken place. I will tell the Government and the House, that gentlemen have lately bought, from the Local Government, thousands of acres of land on some of the salmon rivers, either for salmon fishing or to speculate in salmon fishing; and more, that some Americans have sent agents to buy the net-fishing rights in some of the rivers on the coast, not to fish with nets, but to abolish net fishing in order to promote fishing for mere sport in the upper part of the rivers. Millionaires from the States can come into this country and get hold of our rivers for sport, and drive out the net fishermen; and this is, as I know, what they are trying to do. We know what is occurring in the United States; there are many millionaires who do not know what to do with their money, and as there is not enough sport in that country, they come here and obtain it at the expense of our river fishermen, a hardy class who are ready at all times to defend the country and enrich it by their toil and labor. I hope that the Government will pause before they allow such a thing to be done, and will have this question studied with great care. If I am wrong, I will be glad of it; but I am not in error. I have been studying this question for many years, and this is the state of affairs. These American millionaires wish to possess our rivers for sport, and to become landlords; but this is not a country for landlords. We will never have them, and our people will not sustain or support them, or allow them to be in our midst; but this is not the beginning of it. Twenty years ago the Government granted the River Godbout to one gentleman, who has had it since, and who, perhaps, will have it forever, and for that the Government drove away two or three fishermen, who, I suppose, had to go to the States to earn a living—and what was so done twenty years ago, is now being tried more strenuously than ever, because a lot of men have more money to spend than they know what to do with; and the Government will not do its duty, if it allows this to be done at the expense of the river fishermen of this country.

Mr. MITCHELL. There are just two points, regarding which I wish to ask the hon. Minister in relation to this matter. I may say, of course, it is necessary that legislation should be had with regard to the fisheries, and that the Dominion Statute which governs them should be amended and altered so as to suit what is now believed to be the law of the land, but which is very different from what was believed to be the law of the land some time ago. I think the Ministry deserves credit for en-

deavoring to meet the case as it has arisen; but it is a very difficult one indeed. While the courts have decided that the riparian right exists in the owner of the soil to fish along the shores of the rivers where the lands are so owned, the duty of protecting the fisheries and of regulating them is thrown on the Dominion Government. With reference to the resolution which the hon. gentleman from St. John county read, and which emanated from the Legislature of the Province of New Brunswick, I would say, I think, that those hon. gentlemen have not given to the case the reflection which I consider they should have given, when they condemn in a wholesale manner the provisions of the Bill now under the consideration of this Parliament. I have given to this Bill, in conjunction with several other gentlemen interested in the fisheries, much attention. I have not publicly proclaimed the interest which I have taken in this matter. I have made no speeches concerning it while the Speaker was in the Chair, but I have given, in private Committee, a great deal of consideration to it, in conjunction both with the hon. gentleman from St. John county and other gentlemen interested in this matter, for the purpose of endeavoring, in the difficult circumstances in which the Government are placed, to get the Bill so amended and improved as will best meet the requirements or necessities of the case without doing any injustice, if we can possibly accomplish it, to the riparian proprietors in the different Provinces. I do not know very well how we can very much amend this Bill. It is time that my hon. friend from the county of St. John puts forward a point, in which there is a great deal, that the Government of the day under this Bill have the right to prohibit fishing except under a license. The point taken by my hon. friend is, that the Government may exercise an arbitrary power, and that where a dozen or twenty proprietors are on the stream, they may grant the privilege of fishing to six or ten, and refuse it to the other six or ten; but, at the same time, the hon. gentleman will perceive that unless there is some power vested in the Government every person may come in, whether under a license or not, and exercise the right to fish. The complaint which the hon. gentleman from Gaspé makes may then become a grievance, that the small streams which is the breeding bed of the great fisheries, that supply the commercial fisheries of the country, may be depleted; and I think it is not unwise, and that my hon. friend from the county of St. John, on consideration, will see, that between the choice of two evils, whether we shall allow unlimited fishing by these proprietors, or require of all persons desirous of fishing, having proprietary right to fish, to go to the Government and ask for a license, and that whether one horn or the other of the dilemma be adopted, I think that my hon. friend will say that, in the interest of the protection of the fisheries, it is better to trust to the Government of the day, whoever they may be, than to allow the unlimited fishing which proprietors will naturally exercise if no restriction be placed upon them. The acting Minister of Fisheries, in answer to some hon. gentleman on the other side, who enquired as to what the fee should be, spoke on a subject on which I presume my hon. friend is not very well prepared, because it requires consideration; and as he is only an acting Minister, perhaps he has not had an opportunity to give it that consideration which he shows that he is always prepared to give to matters in connection with his own Department. I do not know whether I caught aright the statement of my hon. friend, when he spoke of limiting largely the licenses, not so much for the purposes of revenue as for the purposes of regulation. I would suggest this to my hon. friend with regard to the right to license fishermen. Years ago, when a different rule prevailed as to the recognition where the right to fish, and the proprietary right existed for fishing prevailed, it was quite a different