

THE SENATE

Monday, Dec. 2, 1867.

The Speaker took the Chair at three o'clock.

After routine

Hon. Mr. Macpherson gave notice that on Wednesday next he will move that a select committee be appointed to inquire into, and report upon, the causes of the recent financial crisis in the Province of Ontario, with power to send for persons and papers.

MARINE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

Hon. Mr. Mitchell moved that the Bill to organize a Marine and Fisheries Department be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Dickey said he begged to call the attention of the Hon. Minister of the Marine and Fisheries Department, and of the House, to certain characteristics of the measure now submitted. He did not rise for the purpose of opposing the second reading of the Bill, but to draw attention to what he conceived to be some extraordinary features therein. It was both short and sweet, concise and comprehensive, but at the same time he felt as if it went very far indeed. The last clause gave powers to the Minister of Marine with regard to all matters therein mentioned, and he alone would have authority to regulate and supervise these very important interests. Now in Nova Scotia these interests were matters of separate legislation, but by the Bill they were handed to the Minister—harbours, ports, the appointment of harbour-masters, and all things appertaining to this class of subjects, were given over to this Minister. In Nova Scotia the appointments of Harbour Masters were in the hands of the Commissioners of Pilots, as were the charge of wharves, buoys, beacons, etc. Then in the same Province there was an appeal from the Commissioners to Superior Courts when parties felt themselves aggrieved, but by this Bill the whole control and final decision upon the questions which might arise were left to the Minister. Then as to Shipping Officers and Shipping Masters he (Mr. Dickey) feared the bill would be found to conflict with the Imperial Shipping Act of 1854. He would not go on remarking upon the other classes of subjects to which the Bill applied, but would say he thought that any legislation which might be deemed necessary, should be in strict analogy to the laws now in

existence in the several Colonies. Then before these subjects were handed over to the Department of Marine and Fisheries this House should know what the regulations were to be. Then there should be an opportunity of appeal from the decision of the Department.

Hon. Mr. Locke thought that the Bill would throw too much work upon one Department, and he thought it was quite possible for the Government to interfere too much with private interests. Then the sea coast and inland fisheries were of themselves very large and important interests, and it was quite possible that an Act for the one class would conflict with the prosperity of the other class.

Hon. Mr. Allan thought that if the Minister of Fisheries would give explanations of the Bill, the objections named might be found not to exist.

Hon. Mr. Locke thought it was quite proper in any honourable member to question the propriety of any clause in the measure which might seem to him to be going too far. He feared, indeed, that under the Bill there would be too much opportunity for setting up a huge political machinery. If the Government, for instance, obtained the power to classify ships, and to appoint inspectors and deputies for that purpose, it could be seen how easy it would be to make political use of the measure. Perhaps when the explanations of the hon. minister were given the objections which appeared to exist would be removed.

Honourable Mr. Mitchell said he would be most happy not only to give any explanations honourable members desired, but moreover be quite ready to consider any suggestions which honourable members might have to offer for the improvement of the measure. He was, indeed, glad to find that the House was so disposed to inquire into the hearings of the Bill, as it was a guarantee to the country that it would jealously guard its legislation. An honourable member (Mr. Dickey) had expressed a fear that the Bill was too comprehensive and conferred too great powers upon the Minister of Marine. Well, in his (Mr. Mitchell's) opinion it would be of little use to have a Department of Marine and Fisheries unless the subjects the Bill embraced were brought under the supervision of such a department. It was also feared that the action which might be taken under it in respect to one part of the fisheries would conflict with the fisheries in another part of the Dominion. Now he conceived that it was quite possible to deal with the inland