

THE FISHERIES BILL.

Second Reading of an Important Measure.

ITS PROVISIONS DISCUSSED.

Attorney-General's Statement in Legislature.

MR. WHITNEY'S ENDORSATION.

Arrangements Made With the Dominion.

Dominion Government to Collect the Revenue and Hand it Over to the Province.

Parliament Buildings, Aug. 15.

The House held a brief session this afternoon and advanced the bill relating to the fisheries a stage. The Attorney-General made an explanation of the provisions of the bill, and at some length informed the House of the negotiations which took place between the Dominion and Provincial Governments and the arrangement made between them for the administration of this important resource for the remainder of the year by the Dominion Government. In this connection he took advantage of the opportunity to correct

an erroneous impression which has existed in some quarters as to the nature of the arrangement in question, and made it quite clear that the staff of officials required by the Province for its new fisheries office will be fewer in number and the salaries of the officials much smaller than in the Dominion Department of Fisheries. Mr. Whitney in general terms approved of the measure being introduced now that the House is in session, and admitted the importance of the subject and the necessity for legislation upon a subject so important. This expression of approbation was, he intimated, to be taken subject to any remarks he might be called upon to make at a later stage.

There were very few members in their seats when the Speaker took the chair. It was private members' day, but the solitary question by a member on the order paper was not put, for the simple reason that the hon. gentleman was not in his seat. The Attorney-General's motion for morning sessions was also allowed to stand over, and the only Government order on the paper was reached.

The Fisheries Bill.

Hon. Mr. Hardy in moving the second reading of the bill relating to the Provincial fisheries gave a brief retrospect of the history of the fishery question. He pointed out that the decision of the Supreme Court was not upheld in all its features, but the court gave to the Province—he spoke from memory—a certain amount of power and authority in relation to what may be called the regulations as to the right to take fish with certain implements, and to the fixing of the close seasons. The question was taken to the Privy Council, and it was there decided that the right to regulate the fisheries grant, leases, licenses or permits rests in the Province; that the Province owns to the bottom of the rivers and lakes; therefore it is the owner of the water and the fish in the water. As a question of civil rights and property, therefore, the right to deal with the taking of fish rests solely with this Government. They have also in the same connection the right to impose license fees or collect charges for purposes of revenue. Therefore the matter is one of considerable importance. The amount received by the Dominion Government in connection with the Provincial fisheries has been from \$30,000 to \$33,000 per annum during the past few years. He apprehended that the revenue from the fisheries will probably be considerably more than that in the future. The decision grants to the Dominion Government the right to make regulations fixing the close season, and as to the use of implements, nets, set lines and other articles that may be used for the purpose of taking fish. These are the principal features of the regulations. The judgment does not exclude from Provincial jurisdiction certain other minor regulations which need not be gone into in detail at present. The Dominion Government have the right also for purposes of their own revenue to require any person who uses a Provincial license to pay such