

withdrawal was pressing, and the mode adopted had admirably answered the purpose in view. The country generally was satisfied with the results achieved, whatever the brokers may think.

**Hon. Sir A.T. GALT** thought the Finance Minister had reason to congratulate himself on the success of his scheme for the removal of the silver. That hon. gentleman had undertaken his (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt's) defence. Now he did not think he required any defence of his conduct while Finance Minister. He had only been in office two years from 1862, and should not be charged with the whole blame of the state of the currency up to the removal of the depreciated silver.

The motion was then carried.

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### THE FISHERIES QUESTION

**Hon. Sir A.T. GALT** asked for copies of all correspondence between the Governments of the Dominion and England since 12th February 1870 on the subject of the fisheries, and of the proposed Imperial and United States Joint Commission, with the minutes of Council relating to the same. He said there was not as correct an idea prevalent with regard to the submission of correspondence as there ought to be. The fault committed here was one of reticence. All correspondence with the English Cabinet not marked by it "private and confidential" should be brought down. In this case there was a great need of as much frankness as possible. There was a feeling of uneasiness abroad in regard to the fisheries. If the Government had confidence on the subject, it could only spring from the contents of the correspondence that had taken place with the Imperial authorities. It was quite as important that the country at large should be put in possession of it, so that it should experience similar confidence. Indeed it was even more important. Publicity was essential to responsible Government, and the English practice was to bring down correspondence far more fully than we had done usually. As to the most important questions with which the British Government had recently been engaged, it had not waited the assembling of Parliament, but has made public its correspondence through the medium of the press. He need but cite the recent communications with Prince Gortschakoff and the American secretary of state, the one on the Eastern and the other on the questions between the States and England. He would like, in particular, to see the despatch or order in council of March 23rd, 1866.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** admitted it had been the practice of late, in England, to be very free in the matter of the publication of correspondence. He himself thought the practice proper and beneficial. His own customary phrase on such occasions—"all papers that could be brought down without detriment to the public service"—was not prompted by any desire to withhold from Parliament or the country information to which they were entitled, and which could with any prudence be asked. The phrase was more one of form than of anything else, and with regard to the present papers meant nothing unbecoming the importance of this question or the rights of the legislature. He had

no objection to send down all the documents which the public interests warranted. He thought there would be no difficulty about this despatch.

**Mr. MACKENZIE** said he observed a statement in a recent pamphlet by a gentleman lately a colleague of hon. gentlemen on the treasury benches, to the effect that it had been a practice of theirs to keep back or mutilate papers demanded by members. There was no denying the impression prevalent in this House that papers had been withheld that should not have been. Anyone who looked over the Imperial blue-books could see that papers usually refused Canadian members could be had a month or two afterwards through those compilations. Last year he moved for correspondence concerning the defence of the country, which we were told could not be brought down. Constant reiteration seemed necessary to success. Papers should be available as soon as the circumstances of the country justified their production.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** said as to the recent pamphlet by a former colleague, who he could be he had no curiosity to know, but he was satisfied that no former colleague of his would have possibly submitted to any mutilation of papers while in office, and that if any mutilation had since been effected, he could know nothing about it.

*(Laughter and applause.)*

**Mr. MACKENZIE:** As to that he had no knowledge; nor was it any of his business.

*(Laughter.)*

The motion was dropped on the understanding that the Government would bring down the correspondence.

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### THE DEFENCE QUESTION

**Hon. Sir A.T. GALT** moved for all correspondence, orders in council, and other papers relating to the mission of the Hon. Alex Campbell to England, and his report thereon. He said he wished for explanations regarding the important subjects covered by the papers asked for here. He was not aware that when the House was prorogued last session the question of defence stood in any different position from that of 1865, the year of the mission to England on this subject. The agreement we then entered into was that Canada should maintain a sufficient militia force, and undertake the erection of fortifications at places west of Quebec and elsewhere. England assumed the fortification of Quebec and the armament of all the defences. There was a general assurance given that on Canada's devoting to the defence of the country all her resources in men and money, England would help here with all the forces at her command. A plan of defence embracing land and naval preparations was also agreed upon. In conformity with that agreement Canada passed an act providing for fortifications. No action thereon had been taken, nor had the Government declared what it intended.

From the omission of the subject from the speech he presumed it was not the intention of Ministers to bring the matter before