

with reference to our sovereignty over these waters as part of the territory of Canada. I am not going to detain the House with any statement of the elementary principles of international law applicable to the case. These are generally well known. What it is important to know is what steps the Government have taken to assert their authority and to prevent any rights or pretensions of rights being acquired by any other people or community on the ground of acquiescence and because of our indifference with regard to these matters. There is no difference in point of law, between the rule of acquiescence as applicable between private individuals and between states. It is therefore of consequence that we should not, by our indifference, permit any loss to be sustained by the Canadian people, and for this reason I move for this correspondence. I assume that the Government have not been indifferent to the rights of the people of Canada; I assume that the Government have not, by negligence, or by sleeping upon their rights, permitted rights of other parties to spring up. It is true that it may involve some expense to this country to exercise proper police supervision over the waters of Hudson's Bay. It seems to me, however, that on account of the narrowness of the straits which connect this bay with the Atlantic, that right should be very easily exercised, and at no great expense to the country. But whether that expense be more or less, I think it is important that it should be incurred for the purpose of maintaining our rights; and I am sure that the House and the public would not be indifferent to the maintenance of the sovereignty of Canada over these waters. I am told that they are valuable at the present time, that the whale fisheries and porpoise fisheries are both extensive, and that the hair seal fisheries in the vicinity are also extensive, and have of late years greatly increased. This being so, and it being probable that at no distant date the bay will be connected with the settled portions of Canada by railway communication, it is highly important that our exclusive jurisdiction over those waters should not be lost, and for these reasons I move the motion now in your hands.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The importance of this question is fully recognized by the Government. The hon. gentleman has referred to the fisheries of the Hudson's Bay and the Canadian interests in those waters, and it is perhaps only right that I should say in advance of the return being brought down, that the question has received due attention, and its importance is fully recognized. The hon. gentleman has referred to the invasion of our territorial rights by the fishing and hunting that are carried on in Canadian waters in Hudson's Bay by foreign fishing vessels. I may say that from time to time rumours of that character have reached me. The remote-

ness of the region, however, has made it extremely difficult to ascertain with any degree of accuracy the correctness of these rumours. Some steps have been taken, through the agency of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, to publish notices that the laws of Canada apply in those waters; but it is only fair to say that since we are not as yet familiar with either the time that those vessels are likely to arrive or the portions of the bay where they may be found at any time, these notices have been to a great extent formal. Nevertheless, so far as the records of my department show, there has been no inaction in that connection that would in the slightest degree prejudice the rights of Canada over this region. On one or two occasions we have, through the agency of the Hudson's Bay Company and through the Indian Department, endeavoured to obtain full information in regard to the illicit trading which is said to have been carried on by small foreign vessels going there possibly to hunt, or engage in the whale or porpoise fishery, but the result of those efforts so far has not been such as to give us much definite information. Even the Hudson's Bay Company officials themselves, though they believe and assert that a good deal of smuggling is carried on in violation of our revenue laws, have not been able, up to date, to furnish such information as would enable us to take definite action. However, the whole subject and the important interests that are there involved, have been under consideration for some time with the object of ascertaining what definite course should now be taken in regard to the various propositions for protecting such rights as we think should be conserved, for instance, the very question of jurisdiction to which the hon. gentleman has referred, and propositions relating to the establishment of a revenue ship for the purpose of maintaining those rights. There would be ample opportunity to assert exclusive sovereignty over those waters because of the narrow approaches to the great waters of the bay. Most of the channels are under six miles in width, and all, I think, are outside the main entrance of the Hudson's Bay itself. So that when it becomes necessary actively to assert such rights as we possess, there would be, as the hon. gentleman says, no great difficulty; and I am inclined to agree with him in the view that no great expense would be entailed. The papers, so far as they relate to the various departments, will, no doubt, be soon collected and brought down, in answer to the hon. gentleman's motion.

Motion agreed to.

THE FUR SEAL.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell) moved:

That it is highly desirable that steps should be taken by the Canadian Government to introduce