

of the Vice-Admiralty Court was defined and extended, and in one respect the words that are used are ambiguous. Section 10 of the Act says: "Claims for seamen's wages" It has been held by the Judge of the Court of Ontario that the effect of the words I have read from the Act of 1863 is to do away entirely with the terms of the clause in the Merchant Shipping Act, so that seamen who have a claim for a mere trifle, \$10, \$12 or \$15, or any sum whatever, have a right, under the decision of that Court, to have the vessel arrested, notwithstanding the owner may be perfectly solvent, and there is no special reason for the interference of that extraordinary power. I propose, by this Bill, to declare that the jurisdiction of the Court is as was defined by the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854, and unless the amount exceeded \$200, or unless the owner should be bankrupt or insolvent, or unless the vessel be under seizure, or unless the seaman has been put ashore at a distance from the residence of the master or owner exceeding 20 miles, the Court shall not have jurisdiction.

Bill read the first time.

INSPECTION OF SMOKED HERRINGS.

Mr. MOUSSEAU moved that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolution:—

Resolved,—That the Act passed in the forty-third year of Her Majesty's reign intitled: "An Act to amend 'The General Inspection Act of 1874,' and the Act amending it," be amended by repealing the tariff of fees to be collected for the inspection of smoked herrings, contained in the third section, and substituting the following:—

- (a) For each box of smoked herrings—one cent.
- (b) For each half box of smoked herrings—one half cent.
- (c) For each quarter box of smoked herrings—one quarter cent.

Resolution considered in Committee and reported.

Mr. LONGLEY said he had scarcely had time to read the resolutions, but if the intention was to reduce the fee for inspecting smoked herrings from two cents to one cent per box, he quite concurred in the proposed amendment of the Act. He would like to have an option, but as that might not be the better course and might be considered a departure from the principle pervading the Act, he would offer no objection.

Mr. GILLMOR said when the recommendation was made last year he was informed by the Minister of Inland Revenue that inspection would not be compulsory. This regulation would be a very onerous one to his constituents. He supposed that about 300,000 boxes of smoked herrings were produced in his county, and with a tax of half a cent per box the burden would be very serious. Up to the present time there had been no inspection, and he could see no possible good to be derived from an inspection of smoked herrings. The previous Minister of Inland Revenue Department had assured him that inspection would not be enforced unless the county decided that it should be done in the public interest. If he could have such an assurance as that now, he would make no objection. He assured the House that this tax would be found a serious burden and could serve no possible purpose. Most of this fish went to the West Indies and to the United States; very little indeed was consumed at home. The tax would be enormous. The boxes cost about 5 cents each and contained 7 to 8 lbs. of fish, so a tax of half a cent on each box would be unbearable. He was sure the Government would not impose this burden if they understood the circumstances, for it would be one of the most unfortunate things the Government ever attempted.

Mr. LONGLEY said he could appreciate the objection of his hon. friend. At the same time, looking at the matter

from his own stand point, he was fully satisfied with the conditions of the Bill. The only argument that could be used against the imposition of the inspection fee, as relating to the class of fish in which his hon. friend was interested, would relate to their inferiority or lesser value than those caught in the county he (Mr. Longley) had the honor to represent. Possibly in relation to the particular class of fish caught in the Grand Manan, the inspection would be of less value than in respect of fish worth two or three times as much. In regard to the inferior class of fish, the inspection would have the effect of improving their quality, and in the end a benefit would accrue to those who cured the fish. He had no hesitation in saying, in respect to the class of fish caught in the Digby Basin, the inspection would be worth a good deal more than it would cost. There would be one cent per box paid for the inspection, and sooner or later the curers of fish would reap an advantage of, perchance, five cents per box, in consequence of the standard of fish being raised. He hoped that the inspection would be of advantage to all smoked herrings caught throughout the Dominion. The fish caught in the Digby Basin were known abroad, where they sometimes brought very high prices, and it was an industry of such magnitude that it deserved to be fostered in every possible way. He was mis-reported the other day when this subject came up when he was made to say that the annual catch of fish in the Digby Basin amounted to 25,000 boxes; what he did say was that in certain years the catch had reached that quantity. He assumed that upon an average the catch of fish there would not exceed 12,000 boxes. When it was considered that this fish was worth from fifty to seventy or eighty cents per box, the House would see the importance of the matter. He apprehended that the inspection would raise the character of the fish to the extent of five cents per box, and if the curers of fish, by paying one cent per box, could reap this advantage, they would have occasion to be satisfied.

Mr. GILLMOR said he was aware that the character of the fish caught in his hon. friend's locality was different from that caught in his own county. They were put up in larger boxes and were a more valuable fish. He could not believe that the Government had received any information from the county he represented that this inspection was at all necessary. He thought it all came from his hon. friend's desire to have some inspection for the fish caught in the Digby Basin. In the county of Charlotte there were 300,000 or 400,000 boxes of fish put up yearly, and the proposed tax upon these boxes would prove an intolerable burden. He would like to have an explanation from the Government of the reason of this tax. The average price of smoked herrings, taking one year with another, was not more than thirteen or fourteen cents a box, and the box did not cost less than five cents, so that the fish on which they were paying half of a cent did not bring, on the average, more than eight cents. The only effect this measure could have was the appointment of officials to go among the fishermen to annoy them. Nobody in the country complained of any grievance, as ninety-five per cent. of our smoked herrings went to the United States, and from there they were exported to the West Indies and South America. He thought it was a great error, and a most unpopular one, for the Government to put a tax on this struggling industry which they ought to protect.

Mr. KILLAM congratulated the Government on the confidence reposed in them by the hon. member for Annapolis. That hon. gentleman seemed to be satisfied that, although the tax on smoked herrings was not altogether correct, yet the matter was quite safe in the hands of the Government.

Mr. ANGLIN felt it his duty, as representing a county interested in herring fishing, to join the hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. Gillmor) in his protest against this