

cult for persons to understand what they could do and what they could not do with regard to this matter. Take the law as it was construed in the very strictest sense, and he apprehended the doctrine propounded by the honorable Senator from New Brunswick would be correct—that there was not a member of Parliament who was a director of a bank or of a joint stock company, or any company dealing with the Government, who would not be amenable to that act, and there would not be twenty members of either House who were not liable to the penalty. In thirty years there had not been, in his opinion, many members who had not been sitting in Parliament directly in the teeth of this law, construing it in the way it was proposed to be done. How was it possible that a member of Parliament could prevent himself from being brought to account for violating the Independence of Parliament Act, if he was in business at all. It had been asserted that it did not apply to Joint Stock Companies, but if the strict construction put upon the Act were correct, it certainly did, and there was not a member of Parliament connected with a newspaper that published a Government advertisement, who was not amenable to the penalty. The truth was the law required to be changed; a mistake had been made in framing it. In England the Act declares that he who offends knowingly shall be liable of the penalty, but in our country the word “knowingly” had been omitted. He hoped the honorable Secretary of State would repeat what had been stated by a member of the Government in the other House, that a bill would be brought down next session to place the guilt where it ought to be. It ill-became honorable gentlemen opposite to get up and assail, not only members supporting the Government, but their own friends in the other House—because there had been as many of one party as of the other in proportion to their numbers guilty of violating this act. He would not justify any member who knowingly violated the law, but the thing had gone so far that it was utterly unreasonable and unjust to single out any one now for doing what all had done—what he himself had done for years without considering it an infringement of the act. He was very glad this bill had passed second reading, and he hoped the law would be placed on such a footing next session that every one would be able to comprehend it.

The bill was reported from Committee without amendment, read a third time, and passed.

THE TARIFF BILL.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT moved the second reading of the tariff bill.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON said he was sorry he could not allow the bill to pass this stage without detaining the House for a few minutes. The subject before the House was the tariff. Now, changing the tariff at any time disturbed the trade of the country very seriously. The present changes were few and were small—so small it was impossible to justify the change. The changes were so insignificant that the Government in introducing the bill ought to apologize for it. The object was to increase the revenue, and the Secretary of State should have told the Senate what additional amount of revenue was required, and how much the changes in the tariff were estimated to yield. There was a deficit of two millions on the 30th of June last. The Finance Minister had not revised the estimates of revenue of last session during the present session of Parliament. So the House did not know what he expected would be the financial result of the present year, without possessing that information, which he thought should have been furnished to Parliament. There could be little doubt that a new deficit would be found to exist at the end of the present financial year. In view of the deficit of last year, and the certain accruing deficit of this year—amounting together to a very large sum he feared—it seemed trifling to make these changes in the tariff for the small sum they would yield. According to the Finance Minister, in another place they would yield only some four or five hundred thousand dollars. If it was intended to supply the deficiency in the revenue by this slight increase of the taxation of the country, it was wholly inadequate for the purpose, and it was difficult to imagine any attempt more lame and impotent than this. The depression throughout the country was wholly unprecedented in the memory of any member of this House. All the enterprises of the country were stagnant and paralyzed, and there was nothing going on but the increase of our financial embarrassment and of our deficits. He did not hold the Government altogether responsible for the prostrate condition of commerce; but he contended if they had a policy, if they had even sympathy for the country, they might mitigate the feeling of despondency that prevailed so widely. He knew that men of means who might be disposed to embark in enterprises in the country were deterred by the fear that if they did so, and became successful, the Government would find some excuse for