

Mr. TUPPER. There has always been an amount more than the taxes provided for, but latterly it has been getting better. Last year we received \$6,000 more than we spent, and, of course, the Marine Hospital at Quebec made quite a difference. The expenditure up to the present has been altogether, for the years mentioned, \$910,000, against \$894,000 received.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. So that practically at present the vote for the Marine Hospitals is met by the receipts.

Mr. TUPPER. Yes.

Steamboat Inspection..... \$23,400

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. How do you account for this increase in the vote for steamboat inspection?

Mr. TUPPER. It is to provide for the appointment of two additional officers to the present staff, one in Ontario and one in the Maritime Provinces. There is only one inspector in the Maritime Provinces now, and we find that the present staff is not able to do the work.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. How do the receipts from this source compare with the expenditure?

Mr. TUPPER. We have expended \$319,000 since 1870 and we have received from dues on shipping \$295,000. Last year we expended \$1,000 more than we received, but we have increased the rate from six cents to eight cents, and under the power given to the Governor in Council to fix the rate as high as ten cents, we hope to meet this deficit.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I am not disposed to raise any objection either to the proceedings of the department or to the mode they propose to make both ends meet, but there are one or two points on which I would like information. In the first place, some persons have complained to me that in the case of small pleasure yachts in certain localities this Act has been captiously enforced; that they were compelled to have certificated engineers, which meant considerable expense, and was of mighty little protection to the public at large, inasmuch as these yachts are private affairs. Do the department require everybody who runs a steam launch to pass an examination before the inspector?

Mr. TUPPER. I remember a case such as the hon. gentleman has mentioned, which occurred very recently, and in which I thought it was very hard to enforce the Act; but, on a careful examination of the whole question, it was perhaps better in the interests of the public that the rule should be adhered to. Under the Steamboat Inspection Act, I have no discretion to make an exception in any case. Certain exceptional cases have been set before me, in which I would have been very willing, had I the power, to meet the requests made to me. In England no exception is made in the case of any boat carrying passengers; but in Canada we passed an Act recently which fixed the limit for the very purpose to which the hon. gentleman has referred. The only case in which we can depart from the rigid rule is that of steam yachts of three tons used exclusively for pleasure or for private purposes. The cases in which I have been unable to make an exception are cases in which the tonnage was larger, and the hon. gentleman will see the danger I would

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT,

run in departing from the letter of this Act. Everything would be well, if no accident occurred; but if, after I had taken the responsibility of giving a permit, there should be an accident with loss of life, the hon. gentleman can easily understand the awkward position in which the head of the department who assumed that authority would be placed. And even had I given permits in those cases in which the Act did not allow them, the penalties could have been collected; my permit would not have been worth the paper on which it was written. There is always a difficulty in arriving at the exact tonnage that could be excepted, but that was the resolution of the Board of Steamboat Inspectors, after careful enquiry.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Of course, no blame can possibly attach to the Minister for adhering to the law. As the law stands he must administer it; but though I am not going to suggest his adding to the legislation of this session, I do think it is a little too grandmotherly for us to meddle with very small private steam launches. The number of these is increasing pretty rapidly, and I think discretionary power might be given to the Minister to a considerably higher limit than three tons: I am hardly prepared to suggest a limit. Of course, where passengers are carried, I shall support the department in taking the fullest precautions; but in the case of purely pleasure boats which carry no passengers, I think that if boats under twenty tons like to blow themselves up, we might let them do it without detriment to the public interest.

Mr. TUPPER. Vessels of three tons are exempt altogether; but I forgot to say to the hon. gentleman that we are able to give permits to another class:

"The Minister of Marine and Fisheries, upon the report of the inspector of boilers and machinery, in whose district the steamboat is to run, may grant a permit to a fourth class engineer or other applicant, sufficiently qualified by his knowledge of steam machinery and his experience as engineer, authorizing him to act as engineer on a steamboat carrying passengers, and not exceeding twenty tons gross tonnage."

That is a discretion which we have; and in the case which I think the hon. gentleman has in mind, my difficulty was not that we could not meet the case, but that the vessel desired to come without any permit and without any inspection from a district distant from Ottawa, and I was confined by the terms of this Act to action only on the report of an inspector.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. The hon. gentleman can consider whether further relaxation can be given. There is another point of much greater public importance to which I would like to call the hon. gentleman's attention. I think the Act makes sufficient provision, but I do not think the authorities enforce it at all; that is, with reference to the very dangerous overcrowding, which, to my personal knowledge constantly takes place on steamers carrying excursions in the summer season. I have seen steamers going out of our lake ports so crowded that if the smallest accident had occurred, several hundred human lives would in all probability have been lost; and I know that the life-saving apparatus on board was wholly and utterly inadequate. I am aware that restrictions are laid down, but I am also aware that in the case of these excursions they are constantly and systematically evaded. I do not know whether the Customs authorities are supposed