

in not taking earlier steps in respect to the payment of the fishery bounties.

Mr. BOWELL. The hon. gentleman would have the country and the House believe that all the clerks in the Department and the fishery wardens had nothing else to do except to distribute this amount of \$150,000. I may say in this connection that 16,000 cheques have been issued in connection with these bounties. If the clerks in the Department had nothing else to do they should not be there. The presumption is that officers in the Department have their regular duties to perform, and that their whole time is occupied. Hence, it was necessary, in order to perform this extra labor, to make a thorough investigation into those claims, that others outside of the Department should do the work, and that those in the Department who were engaged on it should be paid extra. In Halifax, the Department attempted to utilize the Collector of Customs, but he found it utterly impossible to perform his own duties and attend to the verification of these accounts and the payment of a very large number of cheques. When this was represented to the Department the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries asked some other officer to do the work, either Mr. Johnson or Mr. Ogden. The hon. member for Shelburne (Mr. Robertson) could not be serious when he spoke of employing fishery wardens, for he was well aware that nineteen-twentieths of them were selected merely to protect the fish in streams, and to see that the close seasons were observed. Even if some of them were qualified for the work connected with the bounties, they would have required extra pay. When the hon. gentleman attacks the Marine and Fisheries Department, he gives the very best evidence that the Department was not to blame, if any blame attached to anyone. He tells the House that the first reference made by the Department was on the 9th of the month, and that, on the 18th of the same month, the circulars were issued. It might be possible, if the hon. gentleman presided over the Department—

Mr. ROBERTSON. I said the 7th of November.

Mr. BOWELL. I understood the 9th of November; well, from the 9th to the 18th—

Mr. ROBERTSON. The 18th of December.

Mr. BOWELL. Admitting that it was the 18th of December, that is about a month; and during that month—

Mr. ROBERTSON. It is six weeks.

Mr. BOWELL. And during that month or six weeks the whole scheme had to be considered, and they were as busy as they could be in preparing the necessary documents upon which claims could be made, and to lay down a principle and basis upon which to act. The Department certainly was not remiss in its duty, in adopting a system of this kind for the distribution of \$150,000 among so many. It is not yet all distributed, but about 16,000 cheques have been sent out already. A number have had to be rejected, and a number of claims have had to be investigated. There has been no unnecessary delay in carrying out the intentions of Parliament in appropriating this money. I can readily understand—and so can my hon. friend—that in the future, in the distribution of this money, having once established the system, neither large expense, nor trouble, nor delay will take place; he will also bear in mind that all the expenses attending the distribution of this money are extra and are not taken out of the \$150,000, which was given by Parliament for distribution among the fishermen. For the attending expenses, Parliament has been asked to grant extra votes in order that the full amount of money go to the fishermen.

Mr. DALY. It appears to me that the hon. member for Shelburne merely desired to criticise the action of the Department, and that this was the sole object of his remarks

this evening. If I were inclined to criticise the Department it would be in exactly the opposite direction to that which the hon. member for Shelburne has taken. It seems to me that any just criticism would be founded upon a want in that Department in not having employed a sufficient number of persons to distribute this award at one time, and in not having gone outside their own Department and retained the services of others, as they would in that way have distributed the award much more quickly and in a more speedy manner than has been the case under the present arrangement. I think that the Department has been rather inclined to overtax the already fully taxed officers with labors which they were unexpectedly called upon to perform. I can only say that in the county I have the honor to represent, we have but two inspectors of fisheries. This county extends for 100 miles on one side and for over 35 miles on the other side of the capital; and to distribute along the whole length of the shore of this county, to the owners of the numerous boats, who claimed the share in this bounty to which they were entitled, simply through either the agent at Halifax, Mr. Johnson, a very capable but greatly overworked employé of the Government, and of the inspectors of the two sections of the county, either east or west, or by means of these inspectors alone, would be a work of endless trouble and would not result, I am sure, satisfactorily. I believe that if any error has been made by the Department at all, it is in not having employed others and in not having gone outside to obtain the services of others to a greater extent than they have already done. I believe that the remarks of the hon. member for Shelburne are directed more at the employment of a former political opponent who had the honor of a seat in this House, than they were actuated by any motive of benefiting the service, which he now pretends to support. I believe that this bounty granted to the fishermen, is a policy to which this Government can lay claim to the credit of having inaugurated, and it is to this Government and to this Parliament to whom the fishermen of Nova Scotia, in spite of all the observations that now come from the other side of the House, will give, and will continue to give, that credit for years to come.

Mr. ROBERTSON (Shelburne). In the circular issued by the Department to the Collectors of Customs in Nova Scotia, they were instructed to circulate forms which were to be filled up and sworn to before a Justice of the Peace; and they were to see that those forms were correctly prepared, and to certify to them. This was the duty which devolved upon the Collectors of Customs from the instructions issued by the Department. The remarks of the member for Halifax, and of the acting Minister of Fisheries, would lead us to suppose that the officials in Nova Scotia had to examine into the claims, draw the cheques, and pay the money; but as I understand it, all this was done at Ottawa. What was done in Nova Scotia was to circulate the forms which were to be filled up, which were to be certified to by the Collectors of Customs, and this duty of certification took very little time indeed. I believe that so far as the Department is concerned, it did its work faithfully and well, considering the time that it had at its disposal for this purpose. Many returns never reached Ottawa until the middle of last January, and a large number of claims had to be examined by officers here, and the cheques had then to be drawn. I find no fault in the Department here; but I say that the work undertaken by the Ministers of Fisheries and Finance, should have been begun months before they reported on this matter, or brought it first to the attention of the Privy Council. If this had been done in time, then it would have been easy enough to have the claims examined, the cheques drawn, and the money paid long before this. The member for Halifax would lead us to believe that these cheques were drawn by some officer who must