

whether the regulations which were made by the Government for grinding in bond restricted, as I understand the Government alleged it was their intention they should restrict, the grinder in bond to export the identical wheat he had imported, after being manufactured into flour. I think I recollect a discussion in which the hon. the Minister of Customs alleged that in the view of the Government such was the meaning and intent of the former regulations; but not long after, if I rightly understand the question, there was a change made in the regulations to make more definitive, as I suppose, that portion, and make it clearer than it was under the old regulations, that it was the specific product of the imported wheat, the export of which was to satisfy the condition of the bond. My attention has been called to the practical operation, as far as the public can ascertain it, and as far as the course of trade has permitted it to be made known, of those regulations of late days. I have received letters from persons interested in the trade which indicate a state of things I think deserving some explanation. [The hon. gentleman here read extracts from a private letter intimating that Canadian wheat was shipped by some parties to cover wheat imported in bond, thus escaping payment of the duties.] The circumstances, I contend, amply warrant my making this motion.

Mr. BOWELL. There is no objection to bringing down such information as we have in the Department, but I would suggest to the hon. leader of the Opposition that he leave out those words "So far as ascertained," because they imply what is not a fact. The motion asks for a list of cases, "so far as ascertained," of the wheat belonging to others which has been improperly exported. I beg to inform the hon. gentleman and the House that nothing of the kind has been ascertained. If he will substitute the words "if any" for the words objected to, I have no objection to the passing of the motion.

Mr. BLAKE. Certainly. Substitute those words.

Mr. BOWELL. I may, for the hon. gentleman's information, say he is not quite correct in his view of the position taken by the Government last Session, when this question was under discussion. At that time the Order in Council which had been first passed regulating the grinding of wheat in bond and the shipment of flour contained the words: "or the equivalent of such wheat." The House will recollect that when the Tariff was under discussion and a duty imposed on wheat and flour, it was argued that the shipment of flour to an equivalent of wheat which might be imported, would answer the purposes then contemplated. But after experience, the Government decided, in order to make the duty what it was intended to be, a protective duty, the actual product of the imported wheat in flour should be shipped instead of an equivalent. That is the point to which the letter that the hon. gentleman has read, refers. In reference to bonds, we can understand, and any merchant will easily understand, that when goods are placed in bond, a certain time is allowed for the release of those bonds; and in the case of a bond for grinding purposes, a longer period is allowed than in the case of ordinary merchandise, because ordinary merchandise in bond pays the duty as soon as it is taken out for consumption. The mill or the warehouse into which the wheat is put, must, of necessity, be declared a bonding warehouse, in order that the grain may be ground and made up into flour, and sufficient time must be allowed the miller to do that. Then, at the expiration of the bond, the miller's duty is to account for the wheat which has been placed in his mill, by paying the duty, or producing certificates of exportation of the product of that wheat. If the flour has been put upon the market, as indicated in the letter which the hon. gentleman has just read, it must have been placed on the market between the time the wheat was put into the mill and the

expiration of the bond. The duty of Customs officers is, at certain periods, to investigate these bonds, and see whether the miller has the wheat in the mill at the time of their expiration. If he has not, he must account for it by producing certificates that an exportation of its product in flour has taken place, or pay the duty on it. It is true that the Department have had their officers looking into this matter. The hon. gentleman, no doubt, knows that there are Inspectors of bonds on all goods, and my attention having been drawn to this matter, I made it the special duty of the different officers to investigate it. I will be quite prepared to bring down the statements asked for by the hon. gentleman; but I question very much whether the statement made in that letter, and the inference drawn from it by the leader of the Opposition, will prove to be correct. I assure the House that the insinuations made in that letter, that certain privileges were given to millers supporting the Government, have no foundation in fact, I might use a stronger word, but will refrain from doing so. I might also add that in this particular, to which so much attention has been drawn by the Opposition press, I have been very careful that no concession should be made to any one class of people more than another. I challenge any hon. member to point out a single instance, either in the administration of this particular part of my duty, or of any other, in which advantage has been given to one importer over another. In the administration of the Customs Department, so far as regards either the grinding of wheat in bond, the imposition of fines or seizures, or any other matter affecting the collection of revenue, every man, whatever may be his political complexion, has been treated alike. The only irregularity that I have heard of in connection with the subject-matter of this motion, was one in the western section of the country. This slight irregularity—because I think it was nothing more—occurred on the Welland Canal; but from the high standing and reputation of the gentlemen I cannot believe, for a moment, that they had the slightest intention of defrauding the revenue. The moment the officer called their attention to it they at once paid over all that was remaining unpaid.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). While no one would be disposed, I suppose, to believe that there had been instances in which the Government had favored certain mills, the leader of the Opposition, is certainly warranted in bringing this matter to the attention of the Government. It must strike the hon. the Minister of Customs that, so long as we have such an anomaly in the Tariff as we have with reference to the wheat and flour duties, the question will arise, whether it is well grounded or not. It is certainly an anomalous state of the tariff to have a duty imposed on raw material of 15 cents a bushel, and a duty of only 50 cents a barrel on flour, when it requires only $4\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of wheat to make a barrel of flour, thus discriminating against the manufacturer and the miller to the extent of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on every barrel of flour he makes. When people find strong baker's flour put in the market at a lower figure than they are themselves able to put it in, I say they are justified in suspicions with reference to these two items.

Mr. BOWELL. They would be if the fact existed that no duty had been paid upon wheat or flour.

Motion agreed to.

COUNTY COURT JUDGES.

Mr. BLAKE, in moving for copies of all correspondence and Orders in Council with relation to the tenure of office of the County Court Judges in any of the Provinces; of all Local Statutory Provisions bearing on the subject; of any Commissions of Enquiry issued with regard to any County Court Judge, and the instructions accompanying the same,