

He said: I desire to say that, as far as I can judge, the regulations of the department do not give satisfaction. I am well aware that, last year, application was made to have the close season changed as regards the south shore of Prince Edward Island. Now the close season all around the Island begins the 15th July; that is the time the fishermen must take up their traps, otherwise they are liable to a penalty. I believe there ought to be regulations protecting the lobster fisheries around the coast of Prince Edward Island as well as elsewhere; but I find that when the lobster fisheries are closed on the south side on the 15th of July, there is not a sufficient quantity of lobsters then caught to warrant any man investing capital in carrying on that industry. I have a statement from a lobster packer on the south side, for the summer of 1887, which shows that—though he had a thousand traps out, from the time he commenced to fish for lobsters, on the 26th of May, to the 15th of July—he only obtained 175 boxes of canned lobsters, although he employed 1,000 traps and several boats manned by ten men each, besides a lot of men employed on the shore. Now, from that date to the 17th of August, the same traps and the same number of men yielded 835 boxes, which goes to show that if the close season on the south side of the Island be the same as on the north side, the catch will not be sufficient to warrant the investment of any amount of capital in the business. The reason why the lobsters do not make their appearance early on the south side I do not know, but there must be a reason. I find that lobster fishing from the 1st of May to the 15th of July does not result satisfactorily. Several packers in my neighborhood have been fined because, unfortunately, they allowed lobsters under the regulation size to be boiled. I would ask particularly the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries to understand that on the Gulf shore it is impossible for fishermen or packers to see that the lobsters are all up to the size required. It is impossible, where the sea is heavy—and these men have to get the lobsters out of the trap as soon as possible—for them to avoid occasionally bringing three or four small lobsters ashore; and the overseers and wardens, should they detect this, cause these men to be fined. Let me tell you that the imposition of one or two fines on a lobster packer will amount to more than the profit he makes the whole year round. I have also to complain that it appears to me these wardens wear two kinds of spectacles, so that when they approach a factory carried on by a poor unfortunate Grit, the lobsters appear very small, while when they come to other factories the lobsters are magnified in size. I do not blame the department for this gross injustice, but I say that the officers who have charge of the coast—and I speak from experience—are not dealing fairly and justly with the packers. I am sorry to say that they allow political prejudices to creep into their dealings, and I am desirous to find out the amounts which have been paid under the regulations. I know parties in my own neighborhood who have had to pay the full amount of the fines, and I know other persons, belonging to the Tory party, who have not paid the fines yet, and I doubt if they ever will. I know one pet of the Government who has been fined time and again for fishing out of season, and has not paid a cent. I may be wrong, but that is my information, and I have been told that he has appealed. I want to know if the authorities have carried out the regulations in regard to the lobster fisheries on the coast, fairly. I may also say that, although it is wise for the department to have certain regulations in regard to that matter, as they exist they cannot be complied with by the fishermen along the shore of Prince Edward Island; and I believe that it is not right or prudent in any case to make regulations which the people cannot comply with. Such a course tends to make bad subjects. With reference to this regulation as to small lobsters, it may happen that

Mr. PERRY.

a fisherman may bring to the shore a few small lobsters of 8½ inches, and for that reason he must be fined. How could he help it? If those lobsters brought to the shore are to be put back in the water, they might as well be boiled, because they will not live. What we want to see is that there shall be officers who will see that these small lobsters shall be put back out of the trap, and then they will live. I hope the department will take these grievances into consideration and see that these regulations are carried out so well and fairly that they will not injuriously affect the trade. It would be better to close the factories than to allow men to try to make a living in them, with this fine hanging over their heads. It would be better to close the factories than to make regulations which the people are not able to comply with.

Mr. TUPPER. Of course there is no objection to bringing down the return which the hon. gentleman has just moved for. I may say, however, in regard to the remarks he has made as to the regulations in reference to the lobster fishery, particularly in Prince Edward Island, that the regulations of last year were to some extent experimental, and were made for that year only. The regulations for this year have yet to be settled, and I was very much pleased to have the views of the hon. gentleman as to how these regulations might be settled for one of the districts in Prince Edward Island. In reference to the remarks which the hon. gentleman made as to the enforcement of these regulations, I have a word or two to say. He is somewhat vague in the charges, and the very serious charges, which he brings against the officers of the department in that part of the country. I have not heard any charges of that kind before. No specific charges of any sort have been made to the department in reference to any of the fishery boards or other officers engaged in enforcing the regulations in Prince Edward Island; but I may assure the hon. gentleman that if any specific case is known to him, I would be most happy to take it up and deal with it in the most impartial manner. Of course it would be most improper and most reprehensible for any officer to be guilty of the acts which the hon. gentleman states some officers have been guilty of, and I can assure him that if any proper evidence of such actions were brought before me, such an officer would no longer hold a place under the department. Of course the fines are fixed by the magistrate who tries the case, but there is an appeal, and if any party feels aggrieved, he has the opportunity of presenting a petition to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries in reference to the matter of fines, or in reference to any other matter, as to whether the fine should be reduced or not imposed. I have never enquired about nor known—though I have had several matters of that kind brought to my attention since I occupied the position I now hold—the political views or opinions of either the magistrate or the party fined, and I never intend to do so. I do not agree with the hon. gentleman that the regulations are too severe. I am strongly of the opinion that these fines are not nearly so severe as they should be, nor as the corresponding penalties are which are enforced in the United States, particularly in the State of Maine. The hon. gentleman has referred to a warden who allowed political friends to violate the law, and has prosecuted political opponents, who are opponents of the present Government. As I said before, if the hon. gentleman will give me the name of the officer to whom he refers, I will have strict enquiry made into the case. I will have the papers brought down at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. KIRK. The Minister has stated with regard to the regulations for lobster fishing in Prince Edward Island, that they were experimental for last year. The Minister is aware that regulations were also made last year for other parts of the Dominion as well. I would like to know