

second £200; and the third, £100. These sums looked large; but it was to be remembered that, as the amount of the bounties increased, there was a proportional increase in the revenue, consequent upon the legislative encouragement given to the fisheries. It might be compared to the new generally received principle of political economy, to attempt to force or foster any trade, by means of bounties; but, peculiarly circumstanced as the people of this Colony were, and much as encouragement was needed to develop its resources, and to call into action the latent energies of its people, and considering that the inducement to engage in the Fisheries, which was held out by the Act passed in 1851, had certainly been productive of public good, through the spirit of private enterprise which it had called into action, he was of opinion that it would be advisable to renew the Act for three years more. He was not, however, prepared to say that it would be wise to continue the full amount of the tonnage bounty for that time. On the contrary, he thought it would be better, if the Act were continued, to substitute a sliding scale for the fixed bounty, so that it might gradually diminish, and cease altogether when the Act should expire. The great public benefits which had already arisen, and which, to a still greater extent, would, in future, arise from the encouragement wisely given, by the Assembly, to Agriculture, was evident to all; and, in his opinion, for the still better securing of general prosperity to the Colony, a similar liberal policy should be pursued with respect to the Fisheries. That the fishing grounds of Prince Edward Island, no better were to be found in the world. But of what benefit could they be to the people, if the action of the Assembly, with respect to them, should resemble that of the dog in the manger? If the Americans were to be driven from them, our own people ought to receive every useful encouragement, from the Legislature, to benefit, by them, to the utmost. A larger amount of capital was requisite for the carrying on of ship-building, than for the prosecution of the fisheries; but the latter was likely to be the more lasting business of the two; and, therefore, it behoved the Government, by every means in their power, to seek its advancement.

Mr. Yeo.—He would go for the tonnage bounty as before, provided the House would also agree to give a premium on the catch of fish; for the greater part of fish cured in this Colony was caught in boats; and he thought it was unjust to give a tonnage bounty on vessels engaged in the fisheries, whilst no similar encouragement was given to the men who, with more labour and greater risk to their lives, prosecuted the trade in open boats. To deny the last class of fishermen a premium, whilst a bounty was given to the former, was certainly very unfair. About Tignish and the North Cape, many persons had expended much property and labour in the fitting out of boats in a proper manner for great fishing. In that quarter, there was a great deal of business done; and, by those carrying it on, a great deal of money was paid, to the increase of the revenue, on goods landed, for them, in Charlottetown. Unless the House, therefore, should agree to grant a premium on the catch of fish, he would vote against the bounty altogether. He would have all engaged in the fishing trade put upon the same footing, and no unfair distinction made between those who prosecuted it in vessels, and those who carried it on in boats.

Mr. CLARK.—The Hon. the Colonial Secretary had said, that, as the amount of bounties had increased, there had been a proportionate increase in the revenue, in consequence of the encouragement given, by the Legislature, to the fisheries. That might be the case; but, even if it were, he (Mr. C.) could not see that any general or public benefit had arisen from it. It was well known that vessel-fishing had not been engaged in, either to those who had been engaged in it, or to the country. The men engaged on board such vessels had not even earned as much as paid for their victuals; whilst, in many instances, their absence, in harvest, from the farms on which they should have been employed, had occasioned further loss and unnecessary outlay in wages. If a business would not pay of itself, it was not right to tax the country for its prosecution. It was nonsense to talk of encouraging the fisheries by tonnage-bounty on vessels engaged in it. The only benefit derived from fishing, by the people of this Colony, was through the activity and enterprise of those who carried it on in open boats; and, although he would not vote for a tonnage-bounty on fishing-vessels, he would be very willing to vote for a premium on the catch of mackerel; for it was his opinion that, if mackerel fishing were encouraged here, as it is by the Americans, it would prove a source of wealth to the Colony.

Mr. WRIGHT.—Our fishermen were quite as much entitled to legislative encouragement as our farmers. Agriculture and the fisheries were our chief dependence; and it was the duty of the Legislature to foster and encourage both. It was true that our fishing-vessels were not very successful upon our own shores; but, with the returns made by such of them as had been sent to the Labrador coast, there had been good reason to be well satisfied. The fish taken by them had been sold at from 12s. to 15s. a quintal, and the herring at 20s. a barrel; and, in that shape and at that rate, large remittances had been made from the Island, which was certainly much better than to have remitted in cash, which would have been the case, had no legislative encouragement been given to the prosecution of the fisheries. In every point of view, our fisheries were entitled to legislative protection and encouragement. They were a nursery for the productive activity and enterprise of many of our young men; and they were, he believed, destined to be a lasting source of wealth to the country.

Mr. DAVIES.—There was not now the same necessity for granting bounties for the encouragement of our fisheries, as once existed. It was very well known that the success of those who were the first to embark in any new enterprise, was generally much less than that of those who did not engage in it until it had been fairly established, and they could be benefited

by the experience of those who had preceded them in the business. The intention of the Legislature, in first granting premiums to, and tonnage-bounty on, fishing-vessels, was to induce individuals to prosecute the fisheries, in vessels properly manned and fitted out for the purpose, under the impression that, if so prosecuted, it would be found that the business was, of itself, a remunerating one; and, as had been anticipated, after a fair trial of three years, the returns had proved fishing to be a paying business. It was now evident that, when properly prosecuted, it would fairly compensate all engaged in it; and, therefore, there was no longer any necessity to encourage it by legislative bounties. It was generally agreed elsewhere that the sustaining of any branch of business by bounties, was bad policy; and that, if a trade would not pay without such aids, the wisest course was to abandon it altogether. He hoped the same opinion would prevail in the Assembly; but he at least thought it would be right for them to say, Experience has shown that, when our fisheries are properly prosecuted, they are sufficiently remunerative without the aid of bounties; and we shall now, therefore, leave those who are engaged in them to stand or fall by their own industry. I oppose the renewal of the Bounty Act in any shape.

Hon. Mr. MACLEAY.—The subject of bounties had occupied the attention of some eminent statesmen and political economists; and the practice of granting them had, in general, been condemned. Notwithstanding the general condemnation of the practice, it was yet, however, firmly and systematically adhered to by the French, who, in the immediate neighbourhood of his Island, were still, as they had long been, by means of the bounties granted to such of their countrymen as were engaged in the fisheries, raising up crews of active, hardy, and courageous seamen, to man their navy. The Americans also, with a like intention, gave large bounties to their fishermen; and sent their young sailors, in that capacity, into our troubled waters, that, from being habituated to their dangers, they might be the better prepared to fight the battles of their country on the bosom of the deep. The people of this Colony could not, however, have any such motive for the granting of bounties to their fishermen; and the propriety of continuing them might now admit of question. Still, whilst admitting that, he could not but look with admiration upon the proposal submitted by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary; for they who were, last year, engaged in prosecuting the fisheries, under the regulations of the Bounty Act, were, no doubt, intending to do the same, under similar regulations and with like encouragement, this year; and it would amount almost to a species of direct injustice, on the part of the Assembly, to disappoint them, by refusing to continue the Bounty Act. Thence the justice and wisdom of the proposal of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary were apparent. The continuing of the Act for three years longer, and the gradual reduction of the bounty, by means of a sliding scale, and allowing it to cease altogether when the Act should expire, would, undoubtedly, be the fairest and wisest way of abolishing the practice.

Mr. MOOREY maintained that the Legislature had no right to take £1143—the amount of the tonnage-bounty last year—from the people, and give it to a few individuals who were willing to embark in the fisheries. Whilst the farmer was paying the merchants and others owning fishing vessels, to export their fish, all he could get for himself were a few miserable gasperaux or smelts. If the fishing business could not support itself, he would say let it fall, "let every herring hang by its own tail." He would oppose the renewal of the Bounty Act, because he believed the granting of bounties, how much soever they might have benefited a few, had been injurious to his constituents, and not only to them, but to the people in general, and to the poor especially. He agreed with Mr. Yeo in what he had said about those who prosecuted shore fishing in open boats. They were certainly much better entitled to legislative premiums for their encouragement, than they to whom tonnage-bounty had been extended; and were he to consent to the continuance of bounties for the encouragement of the fisheries, it would only be with a view to the benefit of the poor, hardy, and daring men who prosecuted them in open boats upon our shores.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—As he had never been engaged in the fishing business, he could not speak concerning it, from his own experience. He was, however, rather in favor of bounties; for they had certainly been the means of extending the trade. Since the passing of the Bounty Act in 1851, it had been doubled; and the increase had, undoubtedly, been occasioned by the impetus given by the bounties. It was all nonsense to say that it had been attended by no benefit to the farmer. Who supplied the provisions required by the fishing-vessels? They were not imported; but bought from the farmer. And the men employed on board the fishing-vessels were not foreigners, but the farmers' sons. It was all well enough for such hon. members as were opposed to the granting of bounties, to say that there was plenty of employment to be found ashore. At present such was happily the case; but it was not so when the Bounty Act passed in 1851. Should the bounty be hastily and at once withdrawn, the country would cease to place confidence in the Assembly. Many vessels were being fitted out for the approaching fishing season, by individuals fully expecting a renewal of the Bounty Act; and, if it should not be renewed, they and all dependent upon the business would have good reason to be dissatisfied with the determination of the House. Let them look for examples to other countries. What was done in Newfoundland for the encouragement of the fisheries? They did not indeed allow bounties; but they did what was equivalent to the granting of bounties—they allowed all articles, imported for the prosecution of the fisheries, to be admitted duty free. And, again, if they looked to the United States, they would find that there the bounties given were nearly equal to the value of the fish. It was certainly the duty of the Assembly to continue the Bounty Act, and, if they did not give the full amount of bounty at first allowed, to give at least a part. They were imperatively called upon to do it; for it would not only benefit those direct-

ly employed in the fisheries, but, through them, the farmers also, and, in fact, the whole Colony. As to vessel-fishing, it would also, he thought, be well, if the revenue would afford it, to grant a small premium on the catch.

Mr. CLARK.—The trade had certainly not paid those who had embarked in it, although, in the shape of bounties, the country had paid them 4s. 7½d. for every quintal they had brought into the Island.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—It was true that it was not a paying trade; and, for that reason, it was necessary to encourage it by bounties.

Mr. FRASER.—On the same principle, all who were engaged in unprofitable trades, whatever their nature, might look for, and were entitled to, the aid of bounties. When the last Act for the encouragement of the fisheries, by means of bounties, was passed, it was understood that it would be the last Act of the kind; and, if any regard were due to that understanding, it was not quite right to propose a renewal of it. The trade had been supported by legislative aid quite long enough—ever since 1851. It could now support itself; and the prosecution of it ought to be left entirely to the industry, skill, and enterprise of those engaged in it.

Mr. DAVIES.—It had been well shown, by Mr. Macleay, that the object of other countries which gave bounties to their fishermen, was not merely the encouraging of the fishing trade, but the rearing of brave and hardy seamen for their navies; and that there was no such motive to influence the Legislature of this Colony to pursue a similar course. The fact was that if the trade was found to pay, it would be prosecuted; and, if not, it would be abandoned; and so they should leave it.

Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY then submitted a Resolution, to the effect, "That the Act for the encouragement of the Cod and Mackerel Fisheries, be amended by the substitution of a sliding scale of Bounties, instead of the fixed Bounties allowed by the existing Act; and that it be continued for three years only."

Hon. Mr. CONROY wished distinctly to record his vote against a renewal of the Bounty Act. He could not see why the agriculturists should be taxed for the support of the fishermen on the coast. The granting of bounties for the encouragement of the fisheries, as it was said to be, was a mere frittering away of the revenue. It was almost in vain to look for a single disinterested man, in the country, to raise his voice or his hand in favor of the bounty policy. It had given birth to a system of trickery and fraud; and they who had been appointed, by the late Government, to act as inspectors under the Bounty Act, had too often, there was reason to believe, been abettors of the trickery and fraud which had been practised under it. He wished to record his vote against the proposal for the continuation of the Bounty Act, as the very strongest language. 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