

Quebec and Montreal, the river police and the pilotage perhaps, but he was not so sure of the latter; and the hon. gentleman disputed that it affected the revenue in any way. Now, the hon. gentleman admitted that it affected the revenue, but asked how much? He could easily ascertain that. If he referred to the Merchant Shipping Act, he would not find it exactly as he described it. He believed that, in the re-measurement of ships, the owners had a right to select whether they would have deck tonnage measure for the purpose of taking deck cargo or not.

MR. SMITH: The hon. gentleman is quite wrong.

MR. MITCHELL said he might be wrong, but he contended that, if a Minister came here with a proposed alteration of the law, he should be prepared to explain exactly what the alteration was. The hon. gentleman could not deny now that the change would affect the revenue.

MR. SMITH: We never collected anything at all under the Merchant Shipping Act of 1876.

MR. MITCHELL said that if they had allowed the Act to remain a dead-letter, so much the worse. He was surprised to hear this. It was a matter with which he should not have thought of charging the hon. gentleman. It was his first duty to have put this Act into force, and to have collected the revenue. It was evident to everyone that this Act was going to lessen the amount of revenue which was likely to be collected through the change in the measurement, and he thought the hon. Minister should have asked his deputy to make an approximate estimate of the difference so that the House would have some information to go upon.

MR. SMITH: He has something else to do.

MR. MITCHELL said he contended that it was the duty of the Department to furnish the House with such information, and not to tell them that the alteration did not affect the revenue, and then practically admit that it did.

MR. MITCHELL.

MR. PALMER said he was sorry to differ from his hon. friend (Mr. Mitchell), but he believed this to be a move in the right direction.

MR. MITCHELL: I say it is a move in the right direction: wherein do we differ.

Several HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. PALMER said it struck him that the adoption of this Imperial legislation was what they wanted in this country, and he was glad the Government had shown some attention to it in reference to this matter. They could make the dues and the measurement in any way they liked, and he could see no practical interference with the rights of the ship-owners.

MR. MITCHELL said he wished to correct his hon. friend (Mr. Palmer). It had been said that they had to send down an officer to measure the ship every time the vessel was loaded, to see what the duty was. This was not the fact. The officer did not go down for that purpose, but to see that the vessel had not more deck load than the law permitted. He (Mr. Mitchell) had stated that he approved of the resolution brought forward the other day in reference to this, and he still contended that the House had a right to know how, and to what extent, the change would affect the trust funds. The Merchant Shipping Act, section 23, laid down:

"If any ship, British or foreign, other than home-trade ships, as defined by the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, carries as deck cargo, that is to say, in any uncovered space upon deck, or in any covered space not included in the cubical contents forming the ship's registered tonnage, timber, stores or other goods, all dues payable on the ship's tonnage shall be payable as if there were added to the ship's registered tonnage the tonnage of the space occupied by such goods at the time such dues became payable. The space so occupied shall be deemed to be the space limited by the area occupied by the goods, and by straight lines enclosing a rectangular space sufficient to include the goods. The tonnage of such space shall be ascertained by an officer of the Board of Trade or of Customs, in manner directed by sub-section four of section twenty-one of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, and when so ascertained shall be entered by him in the ship's official log book, and also in a memorandum, which he shall deliver to the master, and the master shall, when the said dues are demanded,