

23,666,440 pounds. So far as the fresh fish caught during the summer months is concerned the United States is our only market outside of the home market. It will be seen that our exports of fresh fish to the United States are 21,753,302 pounds more than our imports, and this applies to fresh fish only. Hon. gentlemen will see how important it is that no restriction should be placed upon that trade and that any danger that restrictions might be placed upon our exports to the United States should be removed so far as we are concerned. This fresh fish is admitted free of duty in the United States, but in this country there is a duty of half a cent per pound on fresh fish imported from the United States. I would call the attention of the Minister of Customs to the fact that our total imports amount to only \$51,992 and the amount of Customs collected would of course be a mere trifle. What the fishermen fear is—and they have brought it to my attention and asked that I should bring it to the attention of the Government, to the attention of the House and to the attention of members who are interested in the question as I am—what the fishermen fear is that on account of the duty on fresh fish imported into Canada from the United States, the American Government will during this year in all probability place a duty on fish exported from the Dominion of Canada. If such a duty is put on our fish it will mean a loss to the fishermen of Canada of between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year. This is a very important question for these fishermen and I would ask that the Minister of Customs should look into the question. I am sure that I am voicing the feelings and wishes of every fisherman in the Dominion of Canada from British Columbia to Prince Edward Island when I say that this duty upon fresh fish coming into Canada ought to be removed. It is no advantage to us whatever and it is a constant menace to the fishermen of Canada that the United States will retaliate and put a duty on fish going into that country. Our fish compete with American fish in the markets of the United States, they can get along quite well without our fish, and if this duty is put upon Canadian fish by the American Government it means that the fishermen in Canada will lose by it to the extent of the duty. The business is a precarious one and no obstacle ought to be put in the way of the fishermen of the country making the most they can out of their occupation. I feel that it is only necessary to call the attention of the Minister of Customs to the condition of affairs to induce him to seriously consider the propriety of removing the duty now put upon fresh fish brought into Canada. There is a duty of course upon pickled fish and barrelled fish coming into Canada and in the United States as well, but the United States admit our fish free of duty.

Mr. BOWELL. For immediate consumption.

Mr. LISTER. The fish goes in in June, July, August and September, and of course it is for immediate consumption, but so far as I know, there has been no duty put upon fresh fish at any time by the United States.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. This is a point of some considerable practical importance to a number of persons. Of course if the Government do not wish to give any opinion on it well and good, but I think an answer is due to my hon. friend from Lambton (Mr. Lister). There is no doubt that any such duty as he names, on imports to this country, is a constant provocation to certain parties in the American Congress to put similar duties on our exports, and as the importation into Canada is not one-tenth of our exportation to the United States, it is decidedly to our interest to abolish the duty, if thereby we can avoid the chance of a duty being placed on our own fish.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It is scarcely the time to discuss an alteration of the tariff; but still we have heard

the statement of the hon. gentleman, and it is worthy of every consideration.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Will you consider it?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes; we will.

Mr. BRIEN. This is a very important matter to the people of the section from which I come. In the constituency I have the honor to represent there are something like a hundred fishermen who, with their families, are dependent on this industry alone; and a duty of half a cent a pound placed on fresh fish would throw these men out of employment; and the fact that they have been engaged in this industry for a number of years, and no other, makes them unfit for any other employment. Therefore, I think it is very desirable, considering the small amount of revenue that accrues from this duty, the Government should remove it entirely, and not leave any provocation to the United States to impose a retaliatory duty. The matter having been brought to the notice of the Government, I have no doubt they will give it their attention. The fishermen of my district sell fully 99 per cent. of their catch in the United States; their boats go to American ports constantly; if they are deprived of the American market, they will have none at all; and if they are thrown out of this employment, they will be left in almost destitute circumstances.

Mr. PLATT. I agree with the First Minister that this is hardly the time to discuss tariff matters; but as the interests of the fishermen are very important interests, and as we may not have another opportunity this Session to bring these matters before the Government, we do so now. I have a grievance which I wish again to lay before the Minister of Customs as well as the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Fisheries. It is perhaps not so large a question as that raised by my hon. friend from Lambton, but it is one in reference to which the fishermen are complaining sorely in the district from which I come. I do not know that the tariff itself is at fault, but the regulations of the Customs Department place a duty on nearly all the twines used for fishing purposes in the inland waters. We know that twines are admitted free, but the Customs Department classes all the finer twines which are used for the manufacture of nets for catching herring and all the smaller fish in the inland waters, as threads, which are charged 20 per cent. duty. This may seem a small matter, but it is very important to the fishermen. The habit of these industrious and frugal people is to make their nets during the winter months in preparation for the summer's fishing; and their wives and families as well as themselves are employed at this work. All the twines used for the manufacture of the nets used for fishing in the inland waters are now subject to a duty of 20 per cent., which prevents these people carrying on that useful industry; and they feel the grievance all the more, because, though many of them are supporters of the National Policy and the present Government, they think that in this particular instance home industry is not encouraged, because we find that the very net which is manufactured from this dutiable thread is admitted free. A great many people have been employed in the winter months manufacturing nets for the wealthier fishermen and the merchants; but they have found it more profitable to import the nets than to have them made by these people; so that the fishermen are deprived almost completely of that source of benefit. It would be a very easy matter, it seems to me, to remedy this. I do not know why the Customs authorities have seen fit to place these finer twines on the list of dutiable threads. I was told in the Customs Department that anybody could tell that these finer twines were threads, but I never could find the dividing line between a twine and a thread; and why the manufacturers of this country require a duty to be placed upon these finer twines, which are never used as