

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No; that was not my argument. My argument was what the fishermen would think about it. Of course, the Dominion of Canada considers that the fisheries are much more valuable, but the fishermen on the coast do not care so much about that, about having a share in the five millions and a-half, or the one million, or whatever they may get. What they think of chiefly is to get their fish free into the American markets.

Mr. MITCHELL. I am very glad I misunderstood my hon. friend.

Mr. MACKENZIE. I think the hon. gentleman went so far as to state that they would be perfectly satisfied.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No; I did not. You did not understand the meaning of my argument.

Mr. MACKENZIE. It would be better to clothe the argument in such language as that it may not be misunderstood.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I tried to.

Mr. MITCHELL. I drew attention to these two points for the purpose of having clear explanations, so that no misapprehension shall go abroad as to what the opinions are in this Parliament; because I think it would be a matter of deep regret if a misapprehension went abroad from the statement made by the Premier, such as I understood him to mean. I am glad to find that he does not think the admission of our fish into the United States is a fair compensation for the free use of our fisheries.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Not at all.

Mr. MITCHELL. Sir, in considering the imposition of a duty upon the importation of our fish into the American markets, it is becoming a great question who pays the duty. True it is, that, in the first instance, the question affects the fishermen and the merchants who forward the fish, but it is a question for the consideration of this House, as well as for the Americans themselves, what class of people these duties will ultimately affect the most. I am free to admit there are cases where the imposition of duties comes off the manufacturer, and comes off the producer, but there are cases also where it comes off the consumer; and, in my opinion, the scarcity of fish in the United States, and the fact that they require to go abroad, into the more fruitful waters of British North America, leads me to believe that the shortness of supply for the fifty-five millions of people on the other side of the border will eventually operate to place the duties upon the consumer instead of the producer, and that is the opinion I have always held in relation to the importation of fish into the American market. But, Sir, I am free to admit that what the Premier stated is quite true, and that, perhaps, in the opinion of the people who catch the fish, the duty imposed is the great bugbear, when they formerly got their fish in free, as they do not look to the ultimate effect, as to whether the increased price in the markets where these duties are imposed will not more than compensate for the duty itself. Sir, I look forward to a treaty being accomplished in the future between the two countries. I am not one of those who blame too severely the Government for delay in opening up negotiations; and I am not one of those, as the Premier knows, who advocate that we should go at once, hat in hand, to the American Government. I am quite of the opinion that, at the time they approached the Government in respect to the repeal of the treaty, it would have been unwise, it would have been injudicious in us, to go to them, hat in hand, and ask them to make new arrangements. We have not forgotten what occurred in 1867, when the British Government asked us to allow the Ameri-

cans to come in and fish in our waters free. The position taken by the Government of that day was very different from that taken now. We said: No; we cannot allow that to be done; we cannot allow a temporary right of use to grow up in the future, to be, perhaps, claimed as a right, when it was granted only as a favor, and we imposed a tonnage due upon the vessels of Americans, and allowed them to come in within the three-mile limit. Sir, at that time we took no precaution for the protection of our fisheries for the first three years, any more than we have done this year; and the fact of our not taking any precaution, or putting any police force on our waters, for the purpose of keeping the American without the boundary, was that they came to disregard the imposition of tonnage dues, and, finally, refused or neglected to pay them, and the result was, that if it had not been for the energetic action taken in 1869, the probability is that our fisheries would have drifted along, until the Americans would, by this time, have claimed as a right what now they own they are accepting as a favor. I believe the same course and policy pursued in 1869 should have been followed last year, and it is within the knowledge of the present Minister of Marine and Fisheries that there was a strong opinion expressed in this House, and notably expressed by myself, on the occasion of considering the Bill for the division of his Department, that the Minister should have asked for \$50,000 or \$100,000 to place a marine police force on our coast, and thus have shown the Americans that we meant business. What is our position to-day? I hope the Government will not allow the matter to drift along and find, on 31st December, that nothing has been done, and allow the Americans to continue to fish in Canadian waters free, as they practically did up to 1869. What I think the Government ought to do now is this: Make provision to place upon our waters vessels for the protection of our fisheries. The cost will be trifling, in comparison with the importance of the duty, and the moral effect that will follow from the knowledge of the measures we have taken, when we come to negotiate. I do not say this for the purpose of condemning the Government, but to call the attention of the First Minister to the moral effect such a course would have upon any negotiation that may be carried on, if the time came when negotiations were instituted. I desire to state another point, and it is well to do it now, because I hope before the House next meets there will be something of a definite character known in regard, at all events, to the feelings of the United States with respect to the fishery question. My point is this: The hon. gentleman said that no damage was being done to our fisheries by the Americans fishing within the three-mile limit. The hon. gentleman is not well informed on that point. Within the last three, four or five years, a system of fishing has been established by the Americans, which has been most destructive to our fisheries, and will ultimately ruin them, as the Americans have ruined their own fisheries. The Americans come in with schooners and with nets, and with three, four or five miles of nets, sweep a whole bay, taking all kinds of fish, and for every one marketable mackerel, two or three unmerchantable young mackerel are thrown overboard. Complaints have been made by the fishermen of my own county of this practice, and they have asked whether any protection can be obtained. What I desire to impress on the First Minister, looking to the future, is this: Whatever arrangements may be made—if any shall be arrived at—we ought to provide for a recognition on the part of the American Government that the municipal laws of each country should apply to the fishermen, whether Americans or Canadians, whether on the American coast or on our own coast.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Hear, hear. A good point.