

sans of the little villages, and farmers and farmers' sons—felt that they were being deprived harshly, unjustly and illegally of a pastime they had hitherto enjoyed without let or hindrance. It was found, upon making enquiry, that those policemen, who sometimes acted in an arbitrary, high-handed way, going so far as to threaten arrests, and in one or two instances actually making arrests, were employed under the authority of the Fishery Department, and under the express orders of the Commissioner of Fisheries, Mr. Whitcher. The case of two gentlemen being thus interfered with, came prominently up last September, and they requested me, as a public man, to interest myself in the question. I told them there must be a great mistake—that it was impossible to conceive that the Department of Marine and Fisheries should meddle with the question of game protection in this or any other neighbourhood; but I was assured that such was the fact. I wrote a letter to the Department, couched in courteous terms, and asked if it were possible that those police officers had authority from the Department to warn off and prevent persons from enjoying their lawful sport on the marshes and bays of this river; but I could not get any satisfaction. I received several long letters from the Commissioner on the subject of game protection, couched in vague generalities and avoiding the question, which I put as pertinently as I could, *i.e.*, whether those officers were employed for the purpose of preserving game on this river? At last I got one letter, from which I will read an extract. The correspondence was so very voluminous that I will not trespass upon the time of the House by reading the whole of it. Mr. Whitcher says, under date of the 9th September last:

“Allow me to state that I shall always cheerfully afford you, or any other gentleman, whatever information on this subject it may be thought proper to ask. At the same time, permit me to mention, that the class of persons from whom damage is always to be apprehended in a locality within easy reach of a populous city, like Ottawa, must necessarily be excluded by rigid means from all opportunities to do injury, although it may happen that the general and absolute terms of exclusion bear with some degree of hardship on others whose presence is not only innocent, but desirable on account of the moral and intelli-

gent support, which every enterprise for the protection and propagation of game, fishes (and incidentally birds), it is most essential to secure, as a countervailing influence to that aggressive spirit evinced by parties who complain that the restraints of Game and Fishery Laws infringe the public liberty to kill and destroy game at all seasons.”

Now, here we have a position taken by this Department, not merely to protect game generally, because I do not think sportsmen would object to that, even if it had been done by an illegal extension of authority. There is no question raised as to the protection of game during the close season, but there was an attempt made to prevent certain classes of persons from shooting at all seasons of the year on this river. This action of the Department is certainly the assumption of an authority of a very obnoxious kind; it is a game law of a most offensive character. But it turned out that there was a great deal more in the thing than this. It was not merely the protection of game, in making the river a place of refuge for all the birds of the air, it was the protection of game for the private use of a gentleman and his particular friends. That is what this protection of game resulted in. It was not a general protection of game, but the protection of a selfish and isolated interest, at the expense of the whole community; and that was being done, not at the expense of those gentlemen, but it was being done at the expense of the public, and by the employment of the Dominion Police, who, in their uniforms and bright buttons, were ranged along the edge of the river, to warn away all the young men from this city, and all the artisans, *habitants* and farmers on the river side. It grew to be a very great abuse, and was felt to be such. I addressed, then, when I found I could not get anything more satisfactory than those general statements, one of which I have just read, a letter to the hon. the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, in which I formulated a charge. The letter is dated 29th Sept., 1879, and reads thus:—

“DEAR SIR,—I beg to call your attention to a correspondence which has just taken place between Mr. Whitcher of your Department and myself.

“I have a right to complain that this gentleman has (although he has generously given me at considerable length his personal views on the