

the hon. Minister of Finance, and if we had an election tomorrow, would be one of the few who would vote for that hon. gentleman again. He complained bitterly, indeed, of the annoyance given him, and the fact that he was compelled to pay a higher rate of duty than he believed he should pay. Another case is that of an importation of vinegar. The invoice was, I believe, a perfectly honest and fair one. I have entire confidence in the gentleman who imported the vinegar; but the officials at St. John, acting, I believe, under direct instructions from the Board of Appraisers at Ottawa, determined there should be a price put upon the barrels, and, as the barrels were very substantial, they determined to put a high price on them; not such a price as could be obtained for those barrels if sold in St. John, but such as they believed would be charged for them at the place where the vinegar was put into the barrels. That was believed to be a very harsh case. From the statement made to me I was quite satisfied that the price of the barrels would be included in the invoice price of the white wine vinegar itself. These are two of a great many cases I have heard of. There has been a great deal of complaining. I do not know if the fault is with the Minister of the head of the department. He is, perhaps, over zealous or over eager to prove to the country that he is determined to do his whole duty. That is a very good motive, but it will sometimes carry a man too far; and to approve of the decisions and conduct of his immediate subordinates, will sometimes place him in their hands and allow himself to be guided by those whom he should control. A great deal of annoyance and trouble is being caused by the acts of this Board, sitting in Ottawa, who, it was alleged, when appointed, were to settle all disputes and end all troubles of this kind, and establish all over the country a system of appraisement which would ensure a uniform valuation of all articles of the same class entering the country, and the collection of a fair amount of duty from all. The Minister of Customs may say that there are no longer different valuations at different points. If so, this would be compensation to a great extent for the trouble caused by the appraisers overdoing their duty, but as to the fact of a great deal of annoyance and trouble in very many cases to respectable men, who have just cause to complain, there can be no doubt whatever.

Mr. DOMVILLE. Coming from New Brunswick, I cannot allow any blame to be attached unnecessarily to our provincial appraisers, particularly to the appraisers in St. John. I believe them to be officers who have no other wish than to do their duty. The Chairman of the St. John Board is one of the finest men in the Dominion. I would like to remind the late Minister of Customs (Mr. Burpee) of what was done one time in the case of a cargo of molasses. Where was the honesty in that valuation? It was entered at 10c. or 12c. which was far below its value, the party running the risk of being detected, because he knew he could only be subjected to a fine of a few hundred dollars. I would also refer that hon. gentleman to the importation of a quantity of oil that would not stand the test.

Mr. ANGLIN. When was that?

Mr. DOMVILLE. I refer to the time when the hon. gentleman's friends were in power. Such difficulties must be expected to occur when we see the same kinds of goods sold at different prices at different places. Of course, traders wish to get their goods entered as low as possible. Those not conversant with the laws of the Dominion, imagine they can enter goods at the prices for which they can purchase them. I do not think any one should cast any slur on the St. John appraisers.

Mr. BURPEE (St. John). I do not think any member can say I ever cast the slightest reflection on any customs' officer in St. John, or made any complaint against the appraisers.

Mr. ANGLIN.

Mr. DOMVILLE. I did not say you made any, but that you should not make any.

Mr. BURPEE (St. John). I made no complaints. I know that the head of the office in St. John is a very worthy, respectable man, who knows his duty thoroughly. The hon. gentleman moved for the papers in the case of the molasses referred to, and saw the result of the investigation. I think, if he refers to the papers, he will find there were no molasses imported at the prices named.

Mr. DOMVILLE. I have never seen it; but I have understood that a cargo of molasses was brought into New Brunswick at a low valuation, seized and given up on payment of a trifling fine.

Mr. ANGLIN. I hope the House will pardon me if I appeared to throw any blame on the chief appraiser in St. John, which I certainly did not intend. I think I stated that what was done was upon instructions from the Board at Ottawa. I, too, cheerfully bear testimony to the respectability of the gentleman referred to by the member for King's (Mr. Domville), and the high regard in which he is held. I would be the last person to attack him undeservedly.

Mr. BOWELL. I think the press of St. John made no little noise about the question to which the member for Gloucester has referred. I had the great gratification of meeting, last summer, a large number of the merchants of that city, and, when complaining of the matter, I asked them, is this anything new? They replied—No. I asked: how long have you been paying duty on casks containing vinegar? and he replied, ever since Confederation. I remarked, this, then, is simply a question as to whether the imposition of the duty upon the casks is a correct system. I at once gave instructions, if the duty was imposed on barrels, instead of a quarter cask, as was directed by the appraisers, being taken, they must be accepted as barrels and not as quarter casks. The member for Gloucester says a very respectable merchant told him he entered his goods at the purchased prices. I have not the slightest doubt of it.

Mr. ANGLIN. He said, the regular wholesale purchase prices.

Mr. BOWELL. They may have been the regular ordinary wholesale export prices of that merchant of the United States, but not the fair market value, as provided in the law; hence the appraiser, if he stopped the goods and asked for an increase of their value, did precisely his duty under the law. I am a little surprised when the late Minister of Customs, the hon. member for St. John, says, the principle now carried out was not enforced by the late Administration. I have a score of returns, under my hand, in which the same principle is laid down, and where arbitrary prices have actually been put on a variety of articles, from a wash-tub to a piano, and wherein positive instructions are given to the appraisers and collectors to collect on prices laid down in this circular, and not upon the invoice prices. What more has the present Government done? How can the hon. gentleman complain of my over zeal in endeavouring to carry out the law that he and his colleagues placed on the Statute-book? I think it would be better, in the interests of the revenue and of morality, if opposition, in cases of this kind, should not be employed for party purposes. I think the hon. gentleman should endeavor to assist any officer of the Customs, of any Government, in carrying out this law, instead of endeavouring—I will not say to turn into ridicule—but to make political capital out of everything done by officers appointed by himself. Now I know the case to which the hon. gentleman referred in the city of St. John. I do not know who is interested, but at the very same time the entry—it was an importation of iron, I believe—was made at St. John, another entry of iron of the very same quality managed to get in at another