

Mr. WELDON. I think he is member of the Legislative Council in our Province.

Mr. BOWELL. He ought to be a very respectable and responsible man, then.

Mr. WELDON. I wanted to know if it was on account of the vote he gave last winter.

Mr. BOWELL. I do not know how he voted last winter. I hope he voted right.

Mr. WELDON. He is one of those legislative councillors who has been living in Toronto for the last two years, and who has suddenly turned up as a preventive officer.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. In the event of a session of the Local Legislature, I would like to know how he can attend to both duties.

Mr. BOWELL. There is a difference between a preventive officer appointed at \$25 a month during the time he is required, and a collector of Customs. He is simply a preventive officer, appointed to look after the smugglers. If he leaves there to attend to his political duties at Fredericton, he will not be paid.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I am afraid that the Legislative Council of New Brunswick have fallen tolerably low if their services can be secured for \$25 a month.

Mr. BOWELL. It only shows the respectability of the service.

Mr. WELDON. There is another matter. The merchants of St. John complain a good deal about the discount which is allowed by the Minister of Customs on the invoices. In February last the Board of Trade presented a petition and passed the following resolution:—

"Whereas we fully recognise that Customs regulations are made with the intent of preventing fraud and protecting the honest importer; but  
"Whereas some of the regulations are so interpreted and administered as to practically treat all importers as if their first object is to defraud the revenue; therefore:

"Resolved, That a committee of seven from this board be appointed to consider the subject, and to make such representation to the Government as, in their opinion, may tend to a more liberal construction of said regulations."

Now, Mr. Chairman, there has been great dissatisfaction in St. John regarding the mode in which the importers are treated, some of them men of respectability and high standing. One of them, I know, has been a good deal harassed in regard to this matter of discount. Here is what they say about goods which are sold by discounts from manufacturer's prices—

Mr. CHAIRMAN. I think the hon. gentleman is out of order. We are on the question of salaries.

Mr. WELDON. I think I have a right to discuss the mode in which the Customs are collected. Strictly speaking, perhaps, I may not be correct, but I would like to get the Minister's explanation now.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. I do not think it would be regular to have a discussion at this time.

Mr. BOWELL. I am quite willing to discuss the question with the hon. gentleman now. Of course, it opens the whole question of the Customs law, which is an intricate one. I received that resolution and fully considered it, and will be glad to discuss it, either privately or in the House, with the hon. gentleman. It is difficult to carry out the law so as to please all importers and exporters.

Mr. WELDON. The other day some merchants in St. John actually sold their goods at a heavy loss because it turned out that they had given duties they were obliged to

pay upon discount. It is a matter of very serious importance in the present condition of trade and the keen competition that exists all around. This question of duties upon discount is a very important one for the merchants of St. John. Of course, if I am out of order in bringing this matter up now, I shall take another occasion of doing so.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). I see that the port of Brantford is debited with an increase of salary of \$800, of which I do not complain. But I do not think that the Minister of Customs, though he has a good many faults, has the fault of increasing salaries very rapidly in Ontario. I think this sum of \$800 should not be debited to that port.

Mr. BOWELL. Quite right. I was going to explain to the hon. gentleman that it remained debited to that port, because Mr. McMichael still remains on the staff at that port until he has been officially located. I am using him now, and have been for some time past, to attend to the duties of different ports where vacancies occur. I have found him so valuable an officer that I am sending him now to the more important ports when the collectors are away on leave. Mr. McMichael is charged with the duty of putting the ports in a greater state of efficiency. He is still charged to the port of Brantford; in another year, probably, he will be charged to some other fund. At the port of Clifton, where he has been for some time, there will be a saving of the amount which was formerly paid to the collector, as he was acting in his place, less the additional amount which we should have to pay Mr. McMichael while there. I have given an increase of salary to Mr. Foster, who was appointed to the Customs some time ago, and who was recommended to me as a good officer, and ought to have an increase. He was receiving only \$500, and I made it \$600.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). I think he is entitled to an increase. He was appointed under the Mackenzie Administration some years ago, and was promised an increase of salary before the retirement of the late Minister. That is about the cheapest port in the Dominion, in proportion to the business done.

Mr. BOWELL. One of them.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). It is about the sixth port for collections, and the charges are about \$2,600.

Mr. BOWELL. There was collected \$142,841.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). I wanted that pointed out. What the hon. gentleman has said with respect to Mr. McMichael is true; there is not a more capable officer in the service.

Mr. VAIL. There is an increase of \$1,615 for Annapolis.

Mr. BOWELL. An addition of \$100 has been made to the collector's salary. He formerly received \$800; he now receives \$900; it is proposed to raise his salary to \$1,000, which will probably be the maximum for that port. We propose to place the preventive officer, who now receives \$100, on the permanent staff, at a salary of \$500, in order to look after the American boats running between that port and Boston.

Mr. VAIL. There is an increase of \$200 in Antigonish.

Mr. BOWELL. It is not an increase, because there was a preventive officer employed there the year before last, who received \$200. He died, and the office was not filled last year. This year, I have added two others, McIsaacs, at \$100, and Macdonald, at \$100, which makes the \$200, as formerly.

Mr. VAIL. There is \$105 for Arichat.

Mr. BOWELL. There is a preventive officer at \$100, and \$5 added to the contingent account of the port.