

is the duty of every Government to see that there are just measures and balances, and the Act introduced, and founded on the experience of other nations, was for that purpose. I believe, on the whole, that under my late colleague, Mr. Baby, the administration of the department was thoroughly successful. I believe that by a great deal of tact, forbearance, and judicious concession, he removed many of the objections and heart-burnings that were raised by the carrying out of the Act in its stringency. Whether that has been the cause of the falling off in the revenue is a small affair, because this is not a matter of revenue, but a matter of a just balance and a just weight and measure; and I believe that by degrees dealers are adopting proper weights and measures. The hon. gentleman speaks, also, of the increase of expense. He knows the Act has been developed, and that the Inland Revenue just now is being collected, while we are merely proceeding on the lines of the Act, and in the same spirit as it was carried out by the late Government, the requirements of the Act, neither in number of officers nor salaries, exceeding the limits sanctioned by Parliament. The information shall be brought down at once. The hon. gentleman is quite right in calling the attention of the House to any undue expenditure or any defect in administration in a matter which affects the daily transactions of the masses and those who deal with them.

Mr. BOWELL. I suggest an amendment to the motion by the addition of the word "conduct" for such dismissals, if any; because I am aware that in some cases the hon. gentleman was justified in his dismissals. I would like also to add the year 1878, and a statement showing the receipts and expenditures under the Weights and Measures Act for the year, from the 30th June, 1877, to the 1st July, 1878. I think, with these amendments, the hon. mover will, perhaps, better accomplish his object by obtaining a comparative statement. So far as the administration of the Act goes, in the district in which I live, it has never been so good before, nor has the business ever been so thoroughly attended to as under the present officers.

Mr. ROSS. I am quite agreeable to accept the amendment suggested by the hon. Minister of Customs. I may say, I am sure the First Minister is a notable illustration of the operation of "putting yourself in his place." When he occupied a seat on this side, and his followers also, happily for the country, we constantly heard charges brought against the Department of Inland Revenue of the excessive burdens imposed by the Weights and Measures Act, and of the unreasonable anxiety of the Inspectors of Weights and Measures to enforce that Act. I think hon. gentlemen opposite made this a political question during the elections of 1878. I know many ridings in which it was made a political question, and that in many instances the late Administration was charged with the introduction of that Act, whereas it is the production of the genius, shall I say, of the present Minister of Railways. The Liberal party were not only charged with the framing of the Act, but with all the effects of its administration; and it was no apology for our conduct to say that a just weight and measure were necessary. However, that is the apology urged by the present Government. I am glad to find the right hon. gentleman believes in a just weight and a just measure, and I trust he will apply them to the political acts and intentions of his opponents in future.

Mr. MILLS. With regard to the Minister of Railways, when this measure was under our consideration, an attempt was made to charge the late Administration with changing the law as to weights and measures and introducing a new system, the hon. gentleman had the fairness to deny the assertion. That was one of the few instances in which this hon. gentleman acted fairly towards his political opponents.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. *Ex uno disce omnes.*

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD.

Mr. MILLS. I do not think it is necessary for the Minister of Customs to propose any amendment to the motion of the member for West Middlesex (Mr. Ross). I think it is perfectly clear why the hon. gentleman dismissed the various officers appointed by the late Administration. If you were to put the names of all the people in the constituency in a wheel of fortune, and draw out certain names by lot, and appoint the persons so drawn, it would be impossible to find them all incompetent to discharge the duties of such officers. The late Administration appointed Inspectors of Weights and Measures at various points in the country. When this measure was under our consideration, hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches will remember that I pointed out it was their intention to do by the Act what they had not the courage to do without it—to dismiss all the Inspectors of Weights and Measures under the law as it stood. The First Minister denied any such imputation, and said he had never acted in a way to justify a charge of this kind. In this particular my prediction appeared to be apt, and my apprehensions well founded. The hon. gentlemen opposite did on this occasion adopt the American system, maintaining that to the victors belong the spoils—not simply as they might legitimately have done, to fill up vacancies where they occurred, but they changed the law and made inspection districts larger, where now inspection is very imperfectly performed. If, as the hon. gentleman says, no complaint is made now against the administration of the Act, it is largely because it is not carried out, that no action is taken under it. The instructions to the officers may have been to give the community as little trouble as possible. We know grocers and dry-goods men do not wish their weights and measures inspected every year; and, although we believe it is necessary in the public interest, the traders themselves, whether their weights and measures are perfect or imperfect, will never ask their inspection. In this matter we see only the revenues derived from this source, and, as an hon. gentleman says, not the benefits to the people from the obtaining of just weights and measures. We learn from the return that there has been a great relaxation of the closeness of the supervision exercised when the districts were small and the work was under the immediate attention of those appointed to perform it. We do not need the words added to the motion by the Minister of Customs. We know right well the cause of the dismissals. There was no complaint against the parties. Will the hon. gentleman say that all the inspectors were complained of as being dishonest or incompetent, that formal charges were preferred against them by the department, that these charges were investigated, found to be well made, and the parties dismissed for cause? We know right well that cannot be done, and that when that has not been done, then the Administration have no right to assign as a cause incompetency which has not been established. When the hon. gentlemen had to fill up the various appointments that had to be made in a new district, they should have confined themselves to choosing for those appointments men who were in office at the time. We might as well undertake to amend the law of Customs, dismiss all the Custom-house officers, and then make new appointments with as much propriety as what has been done in this instance. The Government acted on the principle that to the victors belong the spoils. They dismissed the inspectors appointed by the late Administration and filled their places by their own friends.

Mr. BOURBEAU. Although I did not hear the speeches of the two hon. members who have just spoken, I understand that the subject matter of their discourse was a complaint against the law concerning the inspection of weights and measures. The members of the Liberal party find cause to complain because their friends have been dismissed from their situations in the inspection of weights and measures. Yet