

our fisheries. I think the hon. Minister, and I shall say it frankly, was extremely unfortunate in the criticism he passed to-night on my hon. friend from Bothwell (Mr. Mills). There is no gentleman upon this side of the House, or in this Parliament, who brings to a discussion on constitutional questions a more ripe and varied knowledge than does my hon. friend (Mr. Mills).

Mr. TUPPER. Do you think he was fair in his criticism of me to-night?

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) I think it very rarely happens in this House that the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), in giving expression to his mature judgment, has ever offended any of the experienced members on the other side, strongly and effectively as he generally puts his arguments. I venture to say that my hon. friend the Minister, to-night, was not justified when he indulged in very violent and uncalled-for language in reference to my hon. friend from Bothwell (Mr. Mills). My hon. friend to my left (Mr. Mills) presented his point effectively and with force, as he always does, and his points should be answered by argument and not by personal abuse. I venture to say that when the hon. Minister reads the *Hansard* he himself will regret that, as a young member of this House, he used the uncalled-for assertions he did towards the experienced gentleman who spoke on a constitutional point of the very highest importance, and who spoke with a matured knowledge of the subject, as he generally does. I think I am voicing the opinion of the whole House when I say that there is hardly a gentleman in this House, called upon to address it as often as he does, who addresses the House as forcibly and at the same time avoids the use of improper language, as does my hon. friend from Bothwell (Mr. Mills). He very rarely gets into personal wrangles; his remarks are generally good humoured, and I regret on this occasion that they were not received in the spirit that I think an hon. gentleman of the age and experience in Parliament of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries had a right to receive them. A young Minister in this House should accept argument and criticism with courtesy, especially when they come from a gentleman holding the position that the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) does, and the hon. Minister was not justified in retorting in the bitter, sharp and uncalled-for manner that he did.

Mr. TUPPER. Before the hon. gentleman leaves the personal question, would he give us a little evidence on the fairness to me, or his opinion on the conduct of the member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), since he thought it necessary to give his opinion on my conduct. As the hon. gentleman is dealing particularly with this subject, I call his attention to that portion of the remarks of the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), where he charged me, and said that it was a terrible thing for a Minister of the Crown to mislead the House by not being candid with it in quoting statistics.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Hear, hear.

Mr. TUPPER. He now says "hear, hear." What does the hon. gentleman think about a charge of that kind?

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) The hon. gentleman has asked me to give my opinion. I was willing to part from the personal matter, but as the hon. gentle-

man has asked me to give my opinion I will give it to him. The hon. Minister challenged the assertion made by myself with regard to the mackerel fishery. I referred to the mackerel fishery of last year, and, rightly or wrongly, I said that the catch was better than the year before. The Minister controverted that position, and he rose in his place, and in order to show that the mackerel fishing was improving year after year he commenced reading the statistics for 1885, and read to 1887, but he did not read them for 1889 or 1890.

Mr. TUPPER. Would the hon. gentleman tell us whether he asked the statistics for the year before or for the decade?

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) I was referring to the decade.

Mr. TUPPER. And I gave it from 1885.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Now, the hon. gentleman gave the quotations for 1885, 1886, 1887 and 1888, but he did not give them for 1889 and 1890, because when they were read it showed it was against his argument, and my hon. friend from Bothwell (Mr. Mills) contended that that was disingenuous, I beg leave to say that I shared in that opinion.

Mr. TUPPER. I gave my opinion on the man that made that statement, and I will give it again.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) That is the personal point: we will pass from it, because it is not worth while wasting time upon that. I want to come to the main point. The hon. gentleman justifies the imposition of this extreme penalty because extreme penalties exist in the Customs Act. Well, we have chosen to adopt an anomalous fiscal system, and as a necessary auxiliary of that system you adopt extreme and drastic measures to enable you to carry it out. You vest supreme and irresponsible power in the Minister of Customs. The hon. gentleman who exercises that power may or may not exercise it arbitrarily or improperly. What my hon. friend questioned was the principle of vesting that power in a Minister, and I say that his position cannot be attacked. There is no politics in this matter. The hon. gentleman finds on this side of the House one or two hon. members supporting his Bill, and he finds on his own side hon. members who cannot support it. What does the hon. member for Shelburne (Mr. White) say, in whose county there is one of the largest fishing establishments in Nova Scotia? He cannot support the Bill. He says: He will only support it on condition that it does not apply to the kind of purse-seines used in his county. The hon. gentleman dare not support the Bill. I tell the hon. Minister that if he applies the Bill to the kind of small purse-seines that are used along the coast of Nova Scotia he will find an explosion on the part of the fishermen such as would be raised if he attempted to interfere with hook and line fishing. All this goes to show that if you carry the Bill you must carry it with such moderate penalties attached as it will be practicable to enforce. I venture to say that never in the history of our legislation has power so extraordinary been vested in single officers as you propose to vest in them by this Bill. Who is to exercise this power? A judge of the Supreme Court or of the Admiralty Court? No; but a single fishery officer, or a justice of the peace, or a stipendiary magistrate, has the power, on the