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Mr Lawson in opening the discussion, said that he thought Mr Edward had taken much too narrow a view of the causes of decrease in the numbers of the song birds, and suggested that the decrease was caused more by the changes on the face of the country by the improvements in Agriculture, and the increase of population, by which means the favourite haunts of the birds are being gradually encroached upon, than by the stealing of eggs, or the slaughter of the birds themselves. While regretting the manner in which the professional bird catchers treated their victims, he urged that the legislation proposed by Mr Edward was much too stringent, and that it would be impossible to carry out its provisions effectively, unless at ~~an~~ great expense to the country. As regards the sea birds, he protested against any further protection being afforded to them, on the ground that they are undoubtedly

destructive to the supply of both fresh
and salt water fish, and pointed out
that most of those birds nested in such
inaccessible situations, that there is
no danger of their numbers becoming
reduced to the extent which Mr. Edwards
dreads so much.