

that on June 30, 1899, the consumption of tobacco had risen to 2·174 pounds per head, or an increase under the regime of gentlemen on this side of the House, of ·045 pounds per head, and yet hon. gentlemen opposite try to base an argument on the erroneous statement that smuggling has gone on in Canada.

An hon. gentleman opposite and the press of hon. gentlemen opposite, and the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Gillies), stated that no cultivation, no care, no expenditure of capital, no skill, no manufacture, would enable a class of tobacco to be grown in Canada, equal to the foreign leaf imported into Canada. But when an hon. gentleman on that side makes a statement of that description, he shelters himself behind the bald, bare statement, as these hon. gentlemen generally do, without one single fact or authority to support it.

When the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Clancy), said that the labouring classes of Canada, had been taxed \$1,150,000 on tobacco alone, I thought he would have gone on to show why we did not produce that tobacco in Canada, or, if we did produce it, why it was not consumed by the Canadian people; but like the rest of these hon. gentlemen, who have taken every opportunity in their power to throw a stone at Canada's tobacco industry, they have not produced a single line of authority to show that Canadian tobacco is not in every way the equal of the foreign article. I am not foolish enough to stand up in this House, for an instant, and say that we can produce Havana fillings for cigars, but neither can they do it in the United States. I am not going to say that we can produce tobacco of the fancy types for cigars, or the finest Virginia leaf, but three-quarters of the tobacco consumed in the United States, and nine-tenths of the tobacco brought into the Dominion from the United States, can be produced to an equal, if not greater state of perfection in Canada than it can be in the United States, and I purpose backing that statement up, not by my own bald assertion, but by the best authorities—not one or two authorities, but half a dozen of the best authorities—that can be got in the tobacco world, not only on the continent of America, but the continent of Europe. Let me give you first a Canadian authority, Mr. D. H. Ferguson, of Montreal, a man of wide experience both in foreign and Canadian leaf tobacco, and, I think, I am quite within the mark, when I say that there is no manufacturer in Canada, who has a wider and longer experience, or is more versed in every department of the tobacco business, both as regards the growing of tobacco and its cure and manufacture, in this Dominion. Mr. Ferguson says:

Taking into consideration the short period that the cultivation of tobacco in Canada (particularly in Western Canada) has been in vogue the farmers are to be congratulated on their

success in producing a tobacco which in point of quality closely approaches their prototypes in the United States. I refer more particularly to the type known as 'Burley' which is now so largely used in the United States and Canada for sweet chewing tobacco.

I have seen and purchased this type of leaf in both the counties of Essex and Kent and can state that they approach very closely in merit the best grade grown in Kentucky and Ohio. The colour and texture of the domestic article when grown under proper conditions leaves nothing to be desired from a manufacturer's standpoint.

I would like to tell my hon. friend from Bothwell (Mr. Clancy), that I have listened to his voice for two mortal hours, and would ask him to listen to mine, for he is the one gentleman on that side to whom I am talking to-night.

Due allowance should however be made for the want of experience in handling and curing as compared to the long experience and the high state of cultivation which the farmers in the United States have with years of experience brought to a state of perfection. That our farmers can and do now produce a very fair grade of leaf suitable for chewing tobacco and which will improve as their experience develops goes without saying. We now manufacture in Canada plug chewing made from domestic raw leaf which is of very fair quality and compares favourably with that made from good American leaf.

Mr. Ferguson was speaking only of the crop of 1898, and I have just a word to say with regard to that crop. In 1897, the duties upon tobacco gave such a stimulus to the industry, that every kind and grade of tobacco in Canada was gobbled up at enormous prices. The hon. member for Bothwell knows that the manufacturers were paying actually 12 cents and 14 cents and 15 cents a pound for the second growth of tobacco, that would not be cut in the county of Essex to-day. A gentleman residing in Leamington took advantage of the situation to hold meetings through the counties of Essex and Kent in the winter of 1897, and point out to the farmers the enormous advantage which they could gain by abandoning practically everything else and going largely into tobacco raising. He told them that he would buy every pound they grew, at 10 cents per pound and better; and in that prolific district, where they grew a ton of tobacco to the acre, any person can figure up what an enormous profit that would give. That so stimulated the farmers and others in that locality, that many people went into the growing of the plant, who had not the proper means for curing it, and the result was, that some was hung up on the fences, some under shade trees, and a large amount in stables, etc., until fully 50 per cent of the crop went back to the manure heap. These people did not have the facilities for curing it in 1898, yet the best of it was culled out, and that was the tobacco that went on the market in 1899; and so bitter was the lesson

Mr. COWAN.