

tobacco, he has in his favor a differential duty, which presses far more heavily on foreign tobacco, and which enables him to get a better price for his own tobacco. The House consequently will not support the motion of the hon. member, because, in doing so, the hon. member would deprive the Treasury of a revenue of some \$200,000 to \$400,000, and it would be difficult to say by means of what other tax that amount could be brought into the Treasury. The hon. member must not expect that his motion will be supported; moreover, he knows full well that had he wished to succeed with a motion of that kind, he should have brought it forward as a separate motion, and not as a motion of non-confidence in the Government.

Mr. LAURIER. Mr. Speaker, I remember that not so many years ago, three or four at most, the hon. members, who now sit on the opposite side of the House, were of opinion that Canadian soil was peculiarly adapted to the cultivation of tobacco, and that if it was true that the soil was adapted to the cultivation of tobacco, the logical consequence of this state of things was that Canadian tobacco should be free from all Excise duty, and that its cultivation should be promoted by all possible means. At that time, I, for my part, would not have been prepared to admit that pretention; but facts compel me to admit that the experiments recently made have satisfactorily established that the soil of Lower Canada and its climate are evidently suited to the cultivation of tobacco. I see by the last report brought before the House, that in the district of Joliette, for example, a district comprising the counties of L'Assomption and Joliette, the cultivation of tobacco has been considerably developed. A grower told me that an objection formerly raised was that the severity of the climate of Lower Canada did not allow of the tobacco maturing, but it is now an established fact that vegetation is so rapid owing to the intense heat of the summer months, that tobacco ripens fully; consequently, if such is the case Lower Canada is as well adapted to the cultivation of tobacco as Connecticut itself; and if such is the case, the hon. members on the opposite side of the House, in order to be logical, must now support the motion of the hon. member for St. Johns (Mr. Bourassa), for that motion says what they ever said when they were on the Opposition side; and, as the conditions have not changed, they should vote now as they voted then. When last this motion came up before the House, last year, I, for my own part, said that I did not think that the cultivation of tobacco was suited to the climate of Lower Canada, but recent experiences show that it is so suited; and if at the time I did not think it was, I was logical in voting against that motion, but as I now think it is, it would be illogical for me to vote as I did last year, and unless my hon. friends on the other side of the House are convinced that the soil of Lower Canada is not adapted to the cultivation of tobacco, it would be illogical for them to vote against the present motion.

Mr. PLUMB. The hon. gentleman who has just spoken on this resolution has probably forgotten his record of 1878.

Mr. LAURIER. I have just spoken of it.

Mr. PLUMB. The hon. gentleman who is now defending this motion made use of language which I am about to quote. He was then Minister of Inland Revenue, and we remember well that the Finance Minister of that day appealed to the sympathies of each side of the House, not to allow their sympathies to be worked upon to support any proposition which would have the effect of taking off the excise duty on home-grown tobacco, as he said, to the extent of \$700,000 or \$800,000. The hon. Finance Minister and the hon. Minister of Internal Revenue of that day were not then in accord, and could not possibly have had any communication with each other on the subject, for while the hon. Finance Minister admitted,

Mr. LANGEVIN.

by implication, that the home grown tobacco was an important product whose unrestricted growth would affect the revenue by \$700,000 or \$800,000, my hon. friend said:—

"The object of the motion was to collect a revenue from the importation of tobacco, and to relieve home-grown tobacco from duty. His hon. friend had said, in the course of his argument, that they could consider the interests of the agricultural class from the farmer's point of view; but the first question that presented itself was this: Was this country adapted to the cultivation of tobacco? He observed that his hon. friend said that if this Excise duty was abolished for a certain number of years, the production of Canadian tobacco would assume such proportions as to permit tobacco to be exported instead of being imported, as was now the case. But was this possible? Was it possible to maintain seriously, that Canada could ever produce enough of this article to enable it to be exported? It was well known that, above all in the Province of Quebec, and in the Maritime Provinces, and also in Ontario, we could not produce tobacco which could enter into successful competition with the foreign-grown article. We produced an inferior quality of tobacco, which was used for local purposes. The agricultural class was frugal and economical, and it produced tobacco for its own consumption; but, on the other hand, it was equally certain that it was perfectly impossible to raise, in Canada, tobacco which could enter into successful competition with the foreign article, for the simple reason that we had not the climatic conditions necessary to its growth. The Province of Quebec, above all, and all the Provinces east of Quebec, could not raise tobacco on a considerable scale, for the simple reason that their climatic conditions were not proper to the growth of this plant, which was excessively sensible to such conditions. Again, our seasons were too short to permit its successful cultivation; Spring was too late, and autumn came too soon; and, under the best possible climatic conditions, the tobacco which we cultivated could never attain maturity. The farmers were obliged to take it in before it arrived at perfect maturity, and then, very frequently in Lower Canada, they were visited with frosts during the warmest months of summer, even in July and August, and it was known that tobacco was extremely sensible to changes of temperature, and of the weather; and, under these circumstances, as an article of commerce, it lost much of its value, suffering in flavour and quality, and failing to command the price which it would otherwise secure. Owing to these considerations, the argument of his hon. friend lost much of its force. The object of the motion was to encourage the cultivation of tobacco in Canada, though of all the plants that Lower Canada could cultivate, the last thing which they should cultivate was tobacco, which could not become for them an article of export."

Mr. LAURIER. I have since, from further experience of the question, changed that opinion.

Mr. PLUMB. Tho hon. gentleman could hardly have changed his views so suddenly. Have the climatic conditions undergone a change? *Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt*. Hon. gentlemen change their minds, on the same principle, when they cross the floor of the House. The hon. gentleman now, in the face of his past record, makes an appeal in support of a motion which, from his own point of view, I may characterize as a claptrap resolution.

Mr. LANDRY. Mr. Speaker, I was not surprised to hear the assertions of the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier). He has more than once accustomed us to see him burn one day what he had worshipped on the previous one. That is what he is doing to-night, when he burns not only what he worshipped last year, but what he worshipped all the time he was in the Mackenzie Government. It is not necessary for me to go very far back to find in the speeches of the hon. member assertions that condemn him to-day in the most formal manner. I have merely to oppose his last year's to his this year's assertions. What does the hon. member say to-day? He asks that the duty on tobacco be abolished, because he has discovered that the soil of our Province is adapted to its cultivation. This is what he says: "My opinion has changed, because to-day I have before me a report, according to which it is demonstrated that tobacco can easily be cultivated in our country." But, alluding to what he said when he was a Minister, the hon. member for Quebec East said last year, and his words are most important, as they completely condemn the position taken to-day by my hon. friend:

"I was of opinion at that time, and I am still of opinion, that if there is an article which should be subject to a tax, it is certainly tobacco. There cannot be any doubt on that point. Since the Government is in need of revenue, it is evidently better to tax articles of luxury, such as tobacco, than to tax the necessaries of life."