

on taking his advice. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule) does not seem to approve of that.

Mr. SPROULE. Oh, yes.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. A discussion took place on the matter once or twice in the House, and after looking into it we appointed an inspector. Judging by the pained expression of my hon. friend (Mr. Sproule), he does not seem to be lost in admiration at that; he appears to be rather sorry, because it has removed one of his grievances. There may be a difference of opinion as to whether the principle of inspection is effectively carried out or not, and I am afraid I will never be able, under any circumstances, to fully satisfy my hon. friend from East Grey (Mr. Sproule) any more than I should hope to satisfy my hon. friend from Centre Toronto (Mr. Brock) on the question of fiscal policy. My hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) credited me with the statement that I was in favour of filling up the North-west as rapidly as possible. I confess that is the policy I intend to pursue so long as I am in charge of the department.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I am in favour of filling up the vacant lands of the North-west as fast as possible, so long as we can fill them up with the class of immigrants which we are getting at the present time, and which is as good a class as we can possibly expect, take them man for man all the way through.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I do not believe that under any system of selection or searching for immigrants we will get, on the whole, a better class of immigrants than we are getting now. I am in favour of continuing that policy. I am in favour of increasing the number from 125,000 to 150,000 per year, and I am in favour of carrying that out as rapidly as it is possible for us to do so. So long as I have the honour of directing the policy of the department in that respect, that is the policy which my hon. friends may expect to see me follow.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I am not able to agree that the only thing that is necessary in order to secure a large number of desirable immigrants is to increase the customs duties and alter the fiscal policy of the country as indicated by my hon. friend (Mr. Brock). If that were all that is necessary, it is obvious that our friends who were in power for eighteen years, increasing the duties practically almost every time anybody asked them to do so, did not succeed in getting large numbers of desirable people to settle upon our vacant

Hon. Mr. SIFTON.

lands in the North-west. While the Conservatives were in power, and the policy which my hon. friend advocates with such force and sincerity was being followed, the people were going out of the North-west instead of going in. That experience shows that something more is necessary than simply increasing the duties in order to bring about successful settlement.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. However, my hon. friend (Mr. Brock) probably stated his views in that respect a little more strongly than he intended.

Mr. BROCK. Not a bit.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Let me tell my hon. friend (Mr. Brock) that while in 1896 there were only 1,857 homestead entries, last year there were 31,000, and that means that instead of having 1,857 farmers going upon lands in one year and becoming producers, last year 31,000 more farmers became producers. And let me remind the hon. gentleman that they are becoming producers in a part of the country in which, by the bounty of nature, the average individual can produce very much more largely, so far as money's worth is concerned, than he could in any other part of Canada. The result is that in addition to having 31,000 more producers upon a large scale, we have the consumers in the factories which my hon. friend (Mr. Brock) is so anxious to see prosperous.

Mr. BROCK. We are paying an enormous amount of duty on goods coming into this country. They are becoming consumers of German, English, American and other foreign goods instead of Canadian.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. My hon. friend says they are becoming consumers of foreign goods. Does my hon. friend deny that they are also becoming consumers of Canadian goods to a very large extent?

Mr. BROCK. Necessarily, of course.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Will my hon. friend deny that Canadian trade is increasing in Manitoba and the North-west Territories?

Mr. BROCK. No, I do not deny it.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Does he deny that because he has not got a monopoly of the trade, there is no trade going on? I am not going into a lengthy discussion of the fiscal question raised by my hon. friend; but I want the House to understand the policy which this government is following. It is endeavouring to build up a consuming and producing population in our vast western country for the purpose of giving legitimate occupation, without excessive duties, on a legitimate business basis, to the mechanics and artisans