

right, that it will be managed in such a way that their interests at any rate will not suffer, then, I venture to say, a greater farce was never played off on any country than the proposition of the hon. gentleman to take a whole year to carefully consider what he, as Finance Minister, ought to be able to advise this country on to-day. As I have said, Sir, there is one fact which, after fifteen long years, has dawned on the hon. gentleman (I wonder has it dawned on any of his friends around him), and that is, that the Government cannot raise the price of cereals. Sir, you will recollect, and the House will recollect, that we were told by the hon. gentleman time and again that only demagogues would dare to say that the Government could raise the price of cereals, and yet my memory goes back to the time when this country, in 1878, was flooded with demagogues preaching that identical doctrine. The hon. gentleman tells us that our trade in agricultural products with Great Britain has increased by fifteen millions. Well, Sir, I am glad that, bad as the markets are, our farmers have a market at all, but I can tell the hon. gentleman this, that, as regards a large part of that fifteen millions, it is simply the measure of our loss, it is simply the amount of unprofitable trade which we have transacted in place of a much more profitable trade with our natural market. Sir, he was good enough to tell us that the Government came to the help of the farmer in 1889, when they put on a lot of taxes on American products, and got for him, I believe, a million or so of additional markets. And, Sir, he might have added that by that ill-timed and injudicious act he stuck the farmers of Canada for the McKinley tariff and all the mischief it has done them. Had he and his friends pursued, as they were advised from this side of the House, a wise, conservative policy, had they, knowing what was in contemplation from the United States, abstained from putting weapons into the hands of our opponents, the chances are a thousand to one that the most obnoxious portions of the McKinley tariff would never have been enacted. But when he chose in April to defy the American people and to put on taxes which he knew must bring retaliation, he and his Government stand convicted before this country of having, more than any other men, contributed to saddle the McKinley tariff on the farmers of Ontario and the rest of the Dominion. Sir, the hon. gentleman says that the Government lowered the sugar taxes. No doubt the Government, at the dictation of the aforesaid Mr. McKinley, did lower the duties. Did we hear one word of the remission of the sugar taxes until the American Government had made it impossible to keep them on? And when they did reduce them, they did it so as to reduce the amount received by the community in revenue, but not so as to disturb the profits of their refining friends. The utmost amount that could be taken was

taken out of the pockets of the people; but the smallest possible amount was taken out of the pocket of their friend, the chairman of the Conservative committee in Montreal. Sir, the hon. gentleman's ideas are excellent; but I am bound to say his practice is detestable. Now, I come to deal with what I must call the per capita fraud which the hon. gentleman has often referred to. If the hon. gentleman knew anything about what one of his followers calls "scientific protection" he would know that it is the absurdest nonsense to talk about a per capita reduction or a per capita anything else in connection with a protective tariff. Who does not know that the very essence, the very reason for imposing a protective tariff is to compel the bulk of the people to pay a very considerable sum to certain manufacturers, which sum does not go into the treasury? I am not arguing the point whether that is wise or foolish, but I say it is a necessity of the case, and, when that is so, what folly it is to talk of the per capita taxes levied on the people being measured by the sum which goes into the treasury. The tax is taken out of their pockets, and so far as the great mass of the consumers are concerned it does not matter to them whether it goes into the treasury or whether it goes into the pockets of the protected manufacturers. So, likewise, the hon. gentleman tells us that we cannot have free trade because we have \$30,000,000 of taxes to raise. The question suggests itself to my mind: Why have we \$30,000,000 of taxes to raise? Sir, I tell the hon. gentleman that had reasonable prudence and economy been used in the government of this country, had that Government been administered as the late Mr. Mackenzie would have administered it, we would not require to-day to raise \$30,000,000; I doubt if we would require to raise \$20,000,000; and they make their own vicious extravagance, their own folly, and worse than folly, the excuse for denying the people that relief which they have a right to claim. Sir, the hon. gentleman asked my hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, for a policy. Well, this is not the first time the Minister of Finance has made that request. I recollect the hon. gentleman asked Mr. Blaine for a policy. Now he asks Mr. Laurier for a policy, and I have no doubt that Mr. Laurier will be quite prepared to prescribe a policy when he is called in, as I have intimated before.

Mr. FOSTER. I would like to see his diploma.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. What diploma has the hon. gentleman got to qualify him for the post of Finance Minister?

Mr. FOSTER. Good sense.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. He has sense to sit steady on the fence, I grant, and I think that is the only claim he possesses. The hon. gentleman is good enough to bestow on my hon. friend whom I see at the