

than to deny to persons applying the advantages they sought. We used the word "bound," because if the work was printed in sheets it would be easy to take off the title page and insert such a date as 1878, but when books are bound that cannot be easily effected, because a title-page so inserted would easily be detected in the case of bound books, and would be evidence of fraud on the part of the importer. If books are received at the Customs Department without dates being on them, it will be necessary for the party shipping them to adduce evidence that they were printed before the date in question, and if the date cannot be given, the books will be subjected to the usual duty. But in a very short time order will be obtained, and books printed many years ago, fifteen, twenty or thirty, at all events, editions printed more than seven years ago, will have the benefit of free entry.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. gentleman misunderstood me very greatly if he thought I was willing that he should keep his Tariff on books where it is. Not so. I am exceedingly anxious to see a still greater modification of the duty on books; but I was simply referring to the fiscal point of view, and how his proposal would operate. He has given me an admission of a result which I rather expected would flow from this system. He has frankly admitted that the working of the clause will be attended with some difficulty and inconvenience, and probably trouble to importers and the Customs Department, and, of course, trouble to the importers means cost to the public or reduced profits to the importers themselves. The Canadians are not to be entitled to receive the good editions, they will obtain the second-hand books, and the hon. gentleman declares that the cheap editions will be brought into the country. No doubt he is right. It will be the earlier and older editions—those more than seven years old—that will be called for by us, and the old books will be sent from the Old World into the new, because of the operation of this tax. I have always felt that the tax which the hon. gentleman imposed on books was one of the most objectionable character to be found in the whole of the Tariff of 1879, and I have long been anxious for an opportunity to address a few words to the House and the hon. Minister on the subject of that tax. I cannot but feel that we are not doing justice to ourselves in this country in impeding the widest possible diffusion of a taste for literature and knowledge to be acquired by our people. There are three interests to consider in reference to this tax: Those of the public, as readers of books, those of the writers of books, and those who print and publish the books in the country. When you talk of protecting the trade of the production of books, you must remember there are two sets interested in the production of books in this country: those who make the books in the sense of writing them, and those who engage in the trade of putting them into print and having them published; and I maintain the interest of the general public, as readers, and of the whole community, is damaged by the book tax, and that the interest of the writer of books in the country is also damaged by the book tax. Whatever may be the effect upon publishers of books in the country, we never have had, in any part of Canada, that I am aware of, in any degree of vigor or general use, the system which, with good or ill effects, has prevailed so long, and still so widely prevails, in Britain—the system of circulating libraries. We know the book trade there, although it is beginning to change, under circumstances which, it seems to me, intensifies the evil of a heavy tax upon books here, up to, at all events, a recent time, almost entirely, and I might say even to-day, consists not in buying but in using the large appliances of the reading and circulating libraries which exist there. We know one of the practical results of that system has been to limit the circulation of books, which has caused very high prices to be charged, the cheapness of books depending so much on the largeness of

the edition, so that those who did wish to acquire and own a book permanently have had to pay a very much larger price under a system of proprietorship instead of that of hiring. That does not exist with us here. There is a movement in my own Province which has extended so far to at least two cities, to establish free libraries, and it is intended to add, at all events in Toronto, the feature of a circulating and lending library. There are in several other centres of the country libraries which are circulating or free, or public libraries, of more or less importance, notably one established in the town of Portland by the hon. gentleman who sits at my right, an example of munificence, of which I could wish there were more examples in Canada. We have in Canada comparatively few centres which could maintain such libraries, and very few in which we have such libraries, and the bulk of the population must depend, for a long time to come, on the system of purchasing instead of the system of buying or hiring books. We as a people—I do not know whether the Finance Minister agrees in this view—are a democratic people. The principles of popular government are very deeply rooted and cherished by our people, and I am glad to know the root they have taken is one likely to be enduring, and the principles of democratic and popular government are likely to be more widely and extensively applied as years roll on than they have been in the past. It is the first essential of such a system of widely diffused popular Government; in fact the more widely it is diffused the more liberal the institutions, the more direct and extended the share which the people at large take in moulding their own future; the more fully they are permitted to assert the right to govern themselves the more important it is that there shall be spread among them a diffused intelligence, knowledge and apprehension, a quick and intelligent sentiment with respect to public affairs. It is one of the tasks which those who have to guide the concerns of a democratic people, have to address themselves to, to secure as far as possible, at any rate to do nothing that may hinder, popular education or elementary education, it is true, but also the education amongst adults, the widespread, widely diffused education, which is a work that does not end, and may be said hardly to begin, with the attaining of manhood, by the diffusion of literature. I say the more widely spread our popular institutions, the more it becomes the sacred duty of those who have the conducting of the affairs of the country, to see that the literature is widely spread. Well, now, I maintain, that under these circumstances, a serious increase in the cost of books is a thing that ought to be avoided. I maintain, that the Parliament of the country, that the Government of the country should do as little as it possibly can to interfere with the acquisition by individual citizens of the country of these means of knowledge, of improvement, of the widening of the circle of intelligent consideration of the public affairs, and the additional tax of the present Tariff, and so far as it is to apply, continue to apply to the imports of books, is very considerable—15 per cent; and of course we know that by the time the book gets into the hands of the consumer, this is equal to somewhere about 22 per cent.; that is what it means, and it means an addition, therefore, of about that much to the cost of the book. These, I may say, Sir, are the necessities of our moral and intellectual life, necessary to the higher life of the people, necessary to that life in that which a physical and material abundance furnishes after all, a very poor and imperfect existence indeed. Now, the hon. gentleman's proposal is, that the people of Canada, the people of this new country, and in this era of intellectual life and activity, when knowledge is overspreading the country; when new inventions crowd upon us with the utmost rapidity; when fresh notions and discoveries press upon us every day; when the printing press is doing a work greater than it has ever done before incalculably, the hon. gentleman's proposal, that is, that as