

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT moved in amendment, that all the words after the word "That" be left out and the following inserted instead thereof:--

The situation of the country requires that the Government should forthwith reduce all duties on articles of prime necessity, and more particularly on those most generally consumed by artisans, miners, fishermen and farmers, and further, that the negotiations which the House has been informed are to open at Washington in October next, should be conducted upon the basis of the most extended reciprocal freedom of trade between Canada and the United States, in manufactured as well as natural products.

Mr. WELDON. In rising to address the House on the amendment of the hon. member for South Oxford, I shall begin what I have to say by congratulating the hon. Minister of Finance on his good fortune in having to submit to this House so satisfactory a statement as that which he has been able to make, and in having been able to propose such acceptable changes in the tariff as those which he has proposed. It is a good many years in this country since any Finance Minister has had so pleasant a duty to perform as the hon. gentleman had on Tuesday night last. He was then in a position to tell us that, at last, after twenty-three or twenty-four years' struggle, the predictions made two or three years ago that the debt of the country would be allowed for a time to stand still had for two years been verified. He was enabled also to inform Parliament and the country that he proposed to cut down the expenditure, and to effect the greatest reductions of taxes made in any year since the union of the provinces. And he was enabled to give the members of this House and the people of this country the feeling that there was going to be a rest for a time after a most arduous struggle. Almost a quarter of a century ago, the two great parties in Canada, the Reform party and the Conservative party, joined hands and formed a new party, by the name of the Liberal-Conservative party, whose policy was to bring about the union of the British provinces in North America, to bind those provinces together by a railway from the Atlantic coast to the St. Lawrence River, to construct and deepen a system of inland water-ways running from the great lakes down the St. Lawrence. No sooner was the union of the provinces accomplished by the help of that coalition of the Macdonalds, the Cartiers, the Browns and other great men, than the Canadian people, under their strong leadership, set themselves to the fulfilment of that task. In some nine or ten years, at great cost, after great struggles and labour, they had almost completed the Intercolonial Railway. From that time until now, they have been steadily working at the problem of deepening the canals, but shortly after the union, largely, I think, owing to the ambition and foresight of Sir John Macdonald and Sir George Cartier, they conceived the grand project of acquiring possession of the prairie lands of the North-West and the distant Province of British Columbia; and as a condition necessary thereto, they decided on pushing railway communication so as to connect the Atlantic seaboard with the great lakes on the St. Lawrence River, and then cross the prairies and the three chains of mountains to the Pacific Sea. It is with great relief the Canadian people know that these three radical measures have been accomplished. With reference to the canal system, a little remains to be done, but this much has been done, that 27 feet 6 inches of clear water has been

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given to the great ocean ships going to Montreal, and with the expenditure of a little more money, 14 feet of clear water will be given from Montreal to the head of Lake Superior. This useful and great struggle, which perhaps has taxed the energies of Canadians to their utmost for twenty-five years, is about over; and it is with a feeling of great pride that we find those works completed and those predictions verified, and that we can now hope, for some years to come, to find but a very slight increase in our public debt. When I heard the hon. Finance Minister say that, despite the enormous expenditure which has been made since 1879 on railway construction in the North-West, the actual interest *per capita* on the debt in Canada had not increased by more than 6 cents, I thought the Conservative party, which has controlled for twelve years the destiny of the country, had great reason to be proud; but the feature of which we have the greatest right to be proud in that budget was this: that after all this has been done this country is in so sound a position that our Finance Minister is able to say to the whole body of Canadian consumers, that he is in a position to lower their burden of taxation by \$3,500,000, by means of reductions in the tariff. We know well that for many years this article of sugar has been to Finance Ministers of both parties the favourite child of the whole tariff. The Finance Minister in the late Mackenzie Administration used to call it the white-haired boy of the tariff. The sugar duties were so easily collected, their bulk was so large, and the revenue derived therefrom was paid at so few points, that all Finance Ministers were extremely jealous of any attempts to destroy or cut them down. I congratulate the Finance Minister on having had the courage, I may say the self-denial, to take off \$3,500,000 from sugar and to give this great boon of free or almost untaxed sugar to the Canadian people. The member for South Oxford, speaking on this question of sugar on Tuesday last, described the net result of all that the Finance Minister had done as being a substitution of taxation of \$1,500,000 on those who make and deal in and consume liquors and tobacco for \$1,500,000 on the consumers of sugar, and he said the remaining \$2,000,000 had been handed over to the sugar refiners. What a preposterous statement for anyone to make in this House, and particularly for an hon. gentleman sitting in the front benches, and who has been a Finance Minister himself? I venture to say that the consumers of the Dominion have received relief by this measure amounting to almost \$5,000,000.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. WELDON. Hon. gentlemen say "hear, hear." What are the figures? There are 228,000,000 lbs. of sugar consumed annually in Canada. The price has been cut down, as the figures I will read will show, at the refineries both on white and yellow sugar, and, if it be true that one-third of the sugar consumed in Canada is granulated and two-thirds brown sugar, it is a mere matter of arithmetic to see that the cost of sugar at the sea-board is reduced by about \$4,000,000. If you pursue the argument, and admit that the remission of 2 cents a pound at the Custom-house as hon. gentlemen opposite contend, means the lowering of the price by two and one-half cents at the retail store, then, in addition to the reduction of \$4,000,000 at the Custom-house, 25 per cent.