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AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS AND IRON DUTIES.

A few days ago when the House of Commons were discussing the iron duties, Sir Richard Cartwright raised a plea on behalf of the manufacturers of agricultural implements, asking that iron and steel used in their business be placed in the free list. At this point the discussion became both animated and interesting. Sir Richard declared that the duty on iron and steel to this industry amounted to 40

or 50 per cent., and he doubted if it received any protection at all. He believed that if the manufacturers of agricultural implements had been better supporters of the Government they would have been better treated, meaning that the duty upon their product would not have been lowered from 35 per cent. to 20 per cent., or, in the event of the lowering, that the duty upon their raw material, iron and steel, would have been correspondingly lowered. Sir Richard repeated that the tariff had been construed for the benefit of those who helped the Government, to which insinuation Sir John Thompson replied that this was one of the mis-statements Sir Richard made and continued to make; and enquired of him "what are the raw materials employed in manufacturing agricultural implements upon which duty is paid?" To this Sir Richard replied, "every single particle of iron which goes into the production of agricultural implements." A contention ensued between the two Sirs, one contending that because domestic made material was used no duty was paid, the other contending that because of the duty the price was enhanced to that extent. Sir Richard asked, "Is the honorable gentleman ignorant of the fact that the price of every ton of iron and steel in Canada is advanced by the duty?" to which Sir John replied, "I am not ignorant of the fact that that statement has been made, nor am I ignorant of the fact that it is without foundation." At this juncture Mr. Foster intervened a diversion by declaring that Sir Richard's plea was inconsistent with himself, with the policy of his party, and the principles of free trade which he sometimes advocated; which fact had nothing whatever to do with the merits of the discussion; but it was very much to the point when the Minister of Finance showed that the cost of an American binder was \$100, and he would undertake to say that the duty on the raw materials, if imported, instead of being \$20, the amount of the duty would not be more than \$6 or \$8. It was then that Mr. Wallace, the Controller of Customs, saying that Mr. Foster was well within the mark, declared that the iron consumed in the construction of a binder weighed some 1,200 pounds, 600 pounds of which was pig iron and 600 pounds bar iron and steel. The duty upon the pig iron, at \$4 per ton, would be \$1.20, and upon the bar iron and steel at \$10 per ton \$3, making the entire duty only \$4.20. Mr. Wallace challenged Sir Richard to prove that the duty that would be paid by the manufacturers of agricultural implements, even in case of importation, amounted to more than one-third of the protection they received—that as a matter of fact they did not import because the iron produced at home was cheaper.

There were several quite noticeable features in this discussion. It will be remembered that in the early part of April a deputation of manufacturers of agricultural implements proceeded to Ottawa and requested Mr. Foster to place pig iron and bar iron and steel in the free list. These manufacturers imagined that they might strengthen themselves in approaching the Government if they could have the moral support and backing of the Toronto Board of Trade. To obtain this they had previously obtained the consent of the Board to organize what they called a Manufacturers' Section of the Board, composed largely but not exclusively of themselves; but what they did in and at this Manufacturers' Section was not characterized by any