

reasonable tariff which the Government may impose. But the present rate is considered by them unreasonable and exorbitant, and falls with too great a force upon the poor people who are the least able to bear it. In 1877 the hon. Minister of Finance stated that about 800,000 gallons of oil were imported into this country, paying duty, and that probably double that quantity had been imported without paying duty, had been smuggled, in fact. But by reducing the tariff from 15 to 6 cents, he believed the entire amount thus smuggled would be brought in paying duty. I am sure that those anticipations have not been realized, for the reduction in the price of oil has been so great that the inducement still continues, and this contraband trade is still being continued along the frontiers of Canada. Should the duty be reduced to 3 cents, smuggling would no doubt cease. Now, Sir, I find that in 1887 the Minister of Finance reduced the duty from 15 to 6 cents per gallon, making a reduction of 9 cents per gallon. From a statement found in the Trade and Navigation Returns, it appears that there were 570,128 gallons imported in that year; 9 cents per gallon on that quantity amounted to \$51,312.25, which the Government would lose. The Minister of Finance said in the House, on February 20, 1877 :

The Government, therefore, have carefully considered this whole question, with a desire to reduce the burdens of the people as much as they could, and yet not utterly wipe out of existence a Canadian industry which had grown up under the protection of the law enacted by hon. gentlemen opposite.

The conclusion I have come to is this : We propose to abolish the excise duty altogether, and reduce the duty on imported petroleum from 15 to 6 cents per gallon. And by this operation we believe the people of Canada will be the gainers by full 9 cents per gallon on every gallon of the 8,000,000 gallons now consumed. * * *

So, therefore, as we are giving the country the benefit of a reduction varying from \$750,000 to \$1,200,000, we think we may fairly ask the country to recoup us by paying an additional duty of 2 cents a pound on tea that would make us tolerably square and restore the desired equilibrium, so far as it goes.

These statistics inform us that there were imported into Canada that year, 13,482,657 pounds of tea, which, at 2 cents per pound, amounted to \$269,653.14, to establish the equilibrium of the loss to the Government of \$51,311. The Government apparently gained by this swapping of duties, the sum of \$218,332. By this transaction, a burden of \$51,318 was removed from the backs of our people, and, as compensation, another one five times as heavy was imposed. As the succeeding Government removed the duties on tea in 1882, there is a grand opportunity for the present able hon. Minister of Finance to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor, and to reduce the burden which now falls so heavily upon the people in the matter of coal oil to 3 cents per gallon, which would apparently reduce

the receipts in customs duty about \$206,646. By adopting the plan of 1877, and placing a duty of 2 cents per pound on tea, there would be a return to the treasury of \$453,351 on the 22,667,555 pounds of tea now imported, and the equilibrium between coal oil and tea restored and the Government would gain \$246,705 in the trade. That I may not be open to the imputation of inconsistency in advocating a reduction of the tariff upon coal oil and, at the same time, advocating the protection of Canadian industries, I beg to say that I most certainly believe in encouraging Canadian industry and giving Canadian producers the control of the Canadian market, so far as it can be done in the interests of the Canadian consumer. But I believe that there is such a thing as going too far in protection, and I believe, Sir, that the tariff which has been imposed upon coal oil by both governments, has been one of the Canadian industries which has had an obnoxious unreasonable amount of protection which has proved to be a great burden upon the people of Canada. I have been a steady advocate of the National Policy, which I believe has been of inestimable benefit to the people of Canada, and, Sir, I have faith to believe that the benefits and the advantages have been so great as to convince even the hon. members on the ministerial side of this House that the well being and the prosperity of Canada requires the continuance of that policy which has placed us in the favourable position we now occupy amongst the enterprising people of the world.

Mr. LISTER. I do not rise for the purpose of discussing whether the duty on coal oil should be reduced to 3 cents per gallon or abolished altogether. In view of the fact that the tariff is now engaging the attention of the Government, I think it is ill advised at this particular moment that particular items in the tariff should be singled out for the purpose of discussion in this House. I have no complaint to make of the tone of the remarks of the hon. gentleman who has just addressed the House; his speech was very interesting, and if the facts stated by him were really facts there would be a good deal in the argument he made. The hon. gentleman told the House that he is in favour of protecting the industries of this country, and he was good enough to say in addition, that if he thought the proposition which he makes here tonight would have the effect of destroying a natural industry here, he would not be prepared to go so far as he proposes in his present motion. So that when the matter comes to be discussed at the proper time, and the action of the Government is announced to this House, the hon. gentleman will then be in a position to form a more correct opinion as to what this industry can stand and what it cannot stand than he is capable of estimating at the present moment. I may say to the hon. gentleman,