

on having made this motion, which so closely concerned the interests of the farming population, who would be benefitted by its adoption. The present duty on tobacco practically prohibited its cultivation in the Province of Quebec. As the hon. the Minister of Finance had stated in his Budget Speech, it was a matter of prime necessity to favour the agricultural class, which formed the most important part of our population. If the hon. gentleman was sincere in this expression of opinion, this was a favourable occasion for him to prove his sincerity to the country by supporting the motion of the hon. member for Beauce. The hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue had declared that the climate of this country was not adapted to the cultivation of tobacco, and that, if they reduced the Excise duty on Canadian tobacco, it would also be necessary to reduce the duty on foreign tobacco; but this was not the object of the motion before the House. They merely asked for the protection of the home industry and they wished the duty on imported tobacco to remain as it was. The hon. gentleman also said that our tobacco was inferior to the foreign article; but if so, we could not then compete successfully with our neighbors in this particular, and, as a consequence, the duty on foreign tobacco need not be lowered. The hon. the Minister of Justice had attempted to prove, that it was absolutely requisite to take steps to cause the use of tobacco and spirituous liquors to disappear from our midst, and to impose a high duty on Canadian tobacco, which he (Mr. Dugas) considered to be a source of wealth to our farmers. It was necessary to protect the interests of the farming population, which was admitted by the hon. the Minister of Finance to be the first and most important class in the country; and it furnished to the other portions of the population the means of subsistence. He ventured to hope that hon. members would seriously consider this question, and, refusing to be guided by party feelings, would vote for the motion of the hon. member for Beauce.

MR. CASGRAIN said he regretted that this motion was made so late in

MR. DUGAS.

the Session. It was, perhaps, the result of an after-thought on the part of the hon. member for Beauce. Nevertheless, he would take it as it came. He was surprised to hear hon. gentlemen opposite denounce, with so much vehemence and force, the proposition made from that side of the House for the continuance of this tax. He had asked himself, how was it that hon. gentlemen opposite made such a *volte-face* in their position, for these very hon. gentlemen imposed this duty in 1868. In the Votes and Proceedings of the House for the 19th of May, 1868, he saw the names of the hon. members for Charlevoix, Kingston, Bollechase, and Terrebonne; and these hon. gentlemen had then voted for the imposition of this duty. It was true that they were then in power, and had to impose certain taxes in order to raise a certain revenue. They did not fear to levy taxes or to increase the public debt; and the result was that now these hon. gentlemen wished to leave the debt, but not permit the present Government to obtain the revenue necessary to pay these very liabilities. The hon. member for Joliette praised Canadian tobacco, but he did not believe that the hon. gentleman and several of his colleagues had heads strong enough to support the force of this narcotic, though it was certainly a quality of tobacco with which the agricultural class was satisfied. Those who desired a luxury, procured the foreign article. He would say more,—the foreign tobacco which came from Belgium could be obtained for a less rate than Canadian tobacco; and the Syrian and Belgium tobacco was infinitely superior to the home grown article, besides being certainly cheaper. Canadian tobacco was the dearest, in spite of freight and duty. Cigars manufactured in Belgium could, for instance, be bought for less than those which were made here. He regarded this question as he thought it ought to be considered in this country. He was perfectly well aware that the farmers of this country ought to be protected with reference to certain articles, and to this he had no objection; but he did not see what good could be done by means of a motion which, in England, would be