

enormous burthens on the consuming classes of this country, and more than all does it appear probable that those duties will fall, with ever increasing severity, upon the great farming and agricultural class throughout Canada. I do not think, at the present moment, it could be possible to devise a duty which would fall more severely on the agricultural classes than these enormous additional duties on iron. Here we find that at a time when it is well known by every hon. gentleman the consumption of iron by our farmers is daily and hourly increasing; when, owing to the diminution in the ordinary wood supply on which they formerly relied, a much larger quantity of iron is being used on the farm; when the use of expensive machinery largely composed of iron, and iron of those very classes which it is proposed now to most heavily tax, is continually increasing on the farm; when it is probable, according to statements made to me by many important agricultural implement manufacturers, that every farmer, throughout Ontario at any rate, requires to use on his farm \$500 or \$600 worth of implements in which iron forms the chief cost, at a time, too, as I have already pointed out, when the price of all agricultural products is lower than it has ever been known to be in our recollection—that is the time which the hon. gentleman chooses for imposing duties varying from 40 to 50, 60, and sometimes 70 per cent. on the iron articles which are most used by the farmers of this country. There is, I think, not a single article much used by farmers, which will not be found to be increased in price by these duties. From his fence down to the very shoes on his horses feet, in the case of all the implements which he requires to use, and which he is requiring to use more and more every day, we find an enormous addition made to his taxation. The same is true, though not, of course, to anything like as great an extent, in respect to our other great producing industry, the lumber industry. There, too, the hon. gentleman contrives to add more or less to the cost of production; but it is after all in its incidence, on the farming population of this country that this fresh taxation will most heavily fall. Besides imposing large *ad valorem* duties, the hon. gentleman has imposed exceedingly high specific duties on iron; and those duties in this case are more unfair than usual. In the first place it is quite clear, in regard to many articles of common use, that these duties will become almost absolutely prohibitive. In some cases, I find, the hon. gentleman has been imposing duties which, on the commoner grades of goods, are likely to amount to 75 or 80 per cent.; and from the very necessities of the case these duties are likely to be very deceptive in their operation. It is not possible to impose them in such a way that they will bear equally on all classes. The dearer the article the lighter the specific duty, and the cheaper and more common the article the heavier the specific duty. Over and above all that, there is another important consideration. We know that the iron industry, like other industries of that kind, is in a state of constant transition. We have seen the most extraordinary changes from time to time in the cost of producing iron that is largely consumed for all sorts of purposes, and especially for railroad purposes; and I have noticed that when a specific duty is once imposed, it is a matter of extreme difficulty, no matter how greatly the process may be improved, to induce the Government to abate that duty. If anything like a similar reduction in the cost of making iron should occur in the next few years to that which has occurred in the past few years, it is clear that these specific duties will form a strong barrier to improvement in the manufacture. A manufacturer, safely protected by a heavy specific duty, is very little likely to trouble himself in making experiments, and very little likely, until compelled, to adopt improvements which are likely to reduce the cost of the article in which he deals. For all these reasons, I think it is extremely unfortunate at this particular

time that the hon. gentleman should propose to add so seriously to the burthens of the people of this country. At the same time I see no reasonable prospect of our farmers receiving anything like considerably better prices for the articles in which they deal, than they receive at present. Were it otherwise, this might be passed over with the less remonstrance, but as it is perfectly evident that they are going to be exposed to probably fiercer competition in the future than in the past, and as it is likely that the profits on the production of our most important cereals have gone down to such a point that there is only a comparatively small portion of our most fertile Provinces where the grains in which the farmers chiefly deal can be raised at a fair profit, I say it is impossible to conceive anything more insane than to choose that particular time for putting on a tax which must bear very heavily, indeed, on the great farming class of this country. It is not possible to ascertain exactly how much iron is consumed by each farmer in the Dominion, or at least in the older Provinces, but it is clear that the quantity is not only very large, but is necessarily constantly increasing from time to time, and it is quite clear that the result of these duties, and these iron duties in particular, will be to inflict a very heavy tax indeed upon that particular class. Sir, I wish that the hon. gentleman, even at this late date, could be induced to revise, at any rate, that portion of his proposals relating to the increased duties on iron. I am quite certain that within a few years that burthen will be even more seriously felt than it is at present; and I can conceive of no justification whatever, in the present state of this country, for inflicting such an enormous burthen on the people as these resolutions propose to inflict.

Mr. HESSON. Before the Bill is read the third time, I desire to make some remarks, which I was about to make yesterday, but which were held over for the benefit of the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat, on a matter affecting a very important interest in this country. I refer to the question of the Government's policy, or their departure from the policy which I had hoped would be carried out, in regard to an export duty on elm logs. It will be remembered that last year the question of an export duty on pine and spruce logs was brought before this House, and the Government adopted the policy of imposing that duty. Now, I have taken the trouble to look into the Trade and Navigation Returns to see how that duty affected the export of those articles. I find that, in 1885, pine logs were exported to the quantity of 380,000 feet, valued at \$2,300, an average of \$6 per 1,000 feet in the log. After the export duty was imposed in 1886, it is a most remarkable fact that not only did the quantity of logs exported very largely increase, but the price obtained per 1,000 feet also largely increased. There stands out a still more prominent and important fact, that the Government received a very large amount in the way of duties from these exports. In 1886, 2,869,000 feet of pine logs were exported, at a value of \$24,452, an average value of \$8.50 per 1,000 feet in the log, and this in face of the fact that the Government had imposed a duty of \$1 per 1,000 feet on those logs. Now, let us come to another item, more important still, that of spruce logs, on which an export duty was also placed last year, and see how the duty affected the export of that article. If hon. gentlemen who oppose an export duty on this raw product, look at the transactions as revealed by the Trade and Navigation Returns, they must be convinced that the imposition of an export duty on both pine and spruce has not interfered with the quantity exported or with the price, except to work a benefit in both cases. This duty is required, not so much to realise revenue as to protect our native capital, the raw product of the country, which, manufactured here, would give employ-