

proud to rectify the mistake and correct the injustice.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. But don't let hon. gentlemen deceive themselves; they won't find many mistakes, they won't find many injustices, and it is with that knowledge that I make this offer. Sir, I do not mean to say that from an abstract point of view there may not be something, possibly a good deal, to be said against the tariff now in your hands; but I submit that the question at issue is not, is this the best possible tariff in an ideal point of view; the question is, is it, under existing circumstances and conditions a fairly good tariff? Does it fairly redeem the pledges which the Government and their followers have made to the country? Sir, I undertake to say, for my part, that whatever may be said against this tariff, it is a vast improvement on what I may call, without breach of parliamentary rules, the Foster tariff, which was in existence previously. Now, let me ask the House: What was the position in which we found ourselves when we undertook this task? Sir, we found the ship of state, to a great degree, water-logged and dismasted; we found her drifting on the rocks of civil discord, and in the hands of a crew in almost open mutiny. Well, Sir, it is no small thing for us to be able to say that we have made salvage of the ship, we have weathered the rocks, we have driven the mutineers overboard or under the hatches, and there we mean to keep them; and lastly, what my free-trade friends will remember and lay to heart, we have turned the ship's head in the right direction, and toward the open sea. More than that, Sir, and a very important thing it is, they will find when they come to study the tariff, that after you have deducted the taxes on the articles of food which we specially reserve for a special purpose, for the purpose of enabling us at a future day to deal, and I hope to deal successfully, with the people of the United States to establish better trade relations with them—they will find that in this tariff we have purged the late tariff from those monstrous iniquities, from those 40, 50, 60, 70 and 80 per cent duties which were found in it, disguised under the mask of specific and ad valorem duties. That in itself is a declaration of principle, that in itself is a great improvement, that in itself is an evidence that we are determined to carry out the pledges that we have made, the first of which pledges was that, so far as we could do so, taxes should be imposed in a fashion which would be just between man and man, and that the rich man in Canada should not be permitted to pay less than the poor man, which was the inevitable effect of many of the specific duties that we have abolished. I am perfectly well aware that, as a matter of busi-

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.

ness in collecting the revenue, and still more am I aware that for another and not so estimable a purpose, for the purpose of disguising and concealing from the public at large the real weight and burden of the taxes laid upon them, specific duties are always preferred.

Now, Sir, under our tariff the people will have at least that advantage; they will all know what they pay, they will be able to know what the tax amounts to; and let me say, speaking from experience, that it is a far harder thing to inflict a heavy protectionist tariff under ad valorem than under specific duties, and therefore it is a matter of some practical importance that we have succeeded in purging the present tariff to a large extent from specific duties, which had the pernicious effect to which I have alluded. We have paved the way for further reductions, no insignificant advantage. We have given a very substantial advantage to England and English trade. We have materially lightened, or at all events measurably lightened, the burdens of the people, and I think in these respects at all events, we are perfectly consistent with the motions moved by myself, by my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Davies), and with other motions which at various times were submitted by us in former Parliaments.

In some respects the speech of the hon. member for York (Mr. Foster) was, though he did not see it, an exceedingly severe condemnation of the National Policy at large. What was one of his contentions? I will deal with others later on. The hon. gentleman assailed us, in the latter part of his speech at all events, for lowering duties from 40, 50 and 60 per cent. I should like to know whether the hon. gentleman ever seriously reflected what the maintenance of duties of 40, 50 and 60 per cent means to the Canadian public and to Canadian consumers. Sir, in the first place, this was a confession that after eighteen years those industries which required so monstrous a protection had proved utterly incapable of supporting themselves; it was a confession that if they were to exist at all, they could only exist as perpetual pensioners on the people of this country. Let us consider what a duty of 40 per cent and upwards really means. Every one knows that in the great majority of cases of manufactured articles the cost of raw material averages something like one-half of the total cost of the finished article; and if that be so, when you grant a duty of 40 per cent and upwards, it follows that the state says in effect to the manufacturer, or perhaps I should say the manufacturer says to the state: if you are willing to pay all the wages of my workmen, if you are willing to pay the interest on the capital and plant invested in establishing the business, I will conduct the business and be content with the profits derived from the sale of the manufactured article. That is