

for: and assistance in this time of distress.

The manufacturers of this country have been hoping against hope. Some have been working half-time, some three-quarters time, and some have scarcely been keeping their doors open, hoping and believing they would get assistance; and now at this last moment, just as they thought the time of relief was coming, just when their tether was strained to the utmost, when they were keeping on their work-people—not by spending their own money—but by their credit and by pledging their resources, in the hope and belief that they were going to get assistance from the Government, no aid was given. The disappointment was dreadful, and there was deep indignation—curses not loud but deep—at this heartless policy which led them up to the very last moment to expect relief, and at the last moment, owing to some apprehended difficulty which if faced manfully would have disappeared, they were disappointed, and the manufacturers and those who depended upon them, the working people and their families, were left in a state of suspense, and now almost in a state of despair. But not only are the manufacturers—who had a right to expect that they would be assisted—not only are they driven to despair by the callous timidity of the Government, but the merchants in every city and town in the Dominion, who thought and believed from the assurances of the Government, from the inferences they drew, that there would be an alteration in the tariff, pledged their credit in order to get their goods out of bond, and that is a great addition to the commercial suffering, depression and stagnation which exists in the country.

This Government had an opportunity which may never offer itself again. Notwithstanding their very many faults, which have ripened to maturity in a very short time, if they had come forward with a measure of the kind I indicate, and which was indicated by my hon. friend, and by the motion I had the honour to read just now, the country would have condoned all their offences and given them plenary absolution for all their sins of

omission. They would have spoken with renewed confidence, and held their position, and we would have been left in the cold shades of Opposition year after year. They would retain the confidence of the country by having come forward, in the time of need, commercial stagnation, ruin and misery, to the rescue. It is no compensation to us that this mistake, this gravest error of the hon. gentleman opposite, will redound to the credit of the Opposition. I know and feel that it is no compensation to us that the party to which I belong are very many steps nearer a return to power than they were a week ago, in consequence of the Government having adopted this policy. It is no consolation to us. It were infinitely better that the Government should have been sustained for years and years if they had come forward at this time of trouble to the relief of the country, the relief of the manufacturers, the operatives and their starving families.

I have spoken principally about manufacturers, as the resolution of my hon. friend is confined to the protection of that interest. I am sure it can be shown that the agricultural interests have the same rights as the manufacturing and the same claim on this House. Although not a farmer myself, nor the representative of a rural constituency, from the position I hold I am overladen with correspondence from rural constituents and from the farmers of the country—men whom I know to be farmers and not amateurs—real, hardy, intelligent sons of the soil. They all point in one direction—that the farmers, are now awaking to their claim, partly sentiment I admit, but partly from a spirit of justice, and that they will no longer suffer Canada to be flooded with American agricultural products, whilst our productions are literally excluded from crossing their borders. But I shall not enter upon that subject now, but bring it up on a future occasion. It is not because this resolution does not go as far as I wish, and does not embrace all classes, that I do not vote against it; and I call upon all those who are in favour of agricultural protection to come forward and assist the manufacturers first and they will have a claim

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD.