

I notice in the first year the government offered it to the farmers it cost 50 per cent of what was sold to them for advertising the offer and the next year, last year, it cost 10 per cent of the total sale for the same item. There are ways that the government can easily find if they wish to place this twine in the hands of the farmers without an extraordinary cost for selling. It is not my duty nor the duty of any gentleman of the opposition to dictate to the government the method that they should follow in disposing of the twine, any business corporation can do it, and any business government ought to be able to do it. It seems to me that this article so commonly in use by the farmers ought to be sold in such a way that they would not be pillaged, as I am bound to say they have been pillaged during the past four years through the binder twine combination in this country. I maintain that the electors were right in condemning the government for their course in this matter. The government had it in their power to prevent this combination, they had their hands on the lever, and could have used that lever to prevent this condition of things arising. They did not do it, and they received the condemnation of the electors in Ontario for their course upon this subject, and I am bound to say this question had more to do with their defeat in that province than any other question.

Now, it may be said, I know it will be said, that the government did all that any government could do when they took the duty off twine. It will be said, as it was said in the campaign preceding November 7, that the government took the duty off twine, and what more could they do? Well, it is true they took the duty off twine, and I am obliged to condemn them for doing that, as I did all through the campaign. I maintain it was a great injury to the people of this country. Surely 10 per cent was not too high a protective duty on twine. Hon. gentlemen opposite believe in a revenue tariff, so I am told; well, 10 per cent is surely not more than a revenue tariff. The farmers of the country never asked this duty to be taken off entirely; the farmers of this country are not beggars and paupers that they desire to be placed in a different position from any others of their fellow citizens. They were quite willing and are always willing to bear their fair share of the taxation of this country. Ten per cent is not an excessive taxation, even if the farmers paid the whole of it, which I deny. But if the farmers paid a portion of that 10 per cent in 1898 and of the 12½ per cent in 1896, they were quite willing to do so, and to bear their fair share of taxation. But they did not ask for this duty to be taken off. Who did ask for it? Why, the government simply took it off to catch their votes. It was not taken off because there was any demand for it, the duty was a small duty,

and it was taken off to catch the farmers' votes. Now, what was the result? While that duty was on, the twine we used was mostly manufactured in this country. We imported last year under the 10 per cent tariff, 3,364,000 pounds of twine. Even the ten per cent duty, small as it was, was sufficient to enable the manufacturers of twine in this country to live and to make most of the twine we used, giving employment to a large number of men and to a certain amount of capital. These manufacturers in turn afforded a market for a considerable portion of the perishable products of this country that cannot be conveniently exported. Now what was the result of taking off the duty? The twine factories were closed up all but one or two of them, and in 1899, instead of importing 3,000,000 pounds, we imported over 10,000,000 pounds of twine, that is to say, a large portion of what was previously made in this country was thus made on the other side of the line, giving employment to men and capital there instead of to our own people and to our own capital. Now what was the result? Was it to reduce the price of twine? I presume the hon. gentlemen who proposed and carried out that measure believed it would have that result, but the result was quite the opposite, and naturally so. Similar results often flow from such legislation. The removal of the duty caused the downfall of certain factories that had been in operation in Canada, and the handling of the twine fell into the hands of the large combines that exist in almost every article on the other side of the line. As soon as they obtained control of the manufacture here, and our factories were mostly closed, they raised the price of twine, and have kept it up ever since. I am sorry to say that apparently this government has been acting in collusion with them in creating a condition of things under which they could pillage the farmers to the extent of 3, 4 and 5 cents a pound on their twine. This amounts to a considerable sum in the aggregate each year. We import 10,000,000 pounds of twine; I do not know how much was made in this country by the Brantford people. There was a million pounds made in Kingston, and probably fifteen or sixteen million pounds of twine are used in this country altogether. Four cents per pound upon that quantity would be a matter of \$600,000, and I am bound to say the farmers of this country during the past three years have lost at least two million dollars on the binder twine they have bought in consequence of the action of this government. I think it is the duty of the government at once to declare their intention with regard to what they propose to do in the manufacture and sale of binder twine the coming year. It is a matter which cannot long be delayed, and if they intend to take a certain course they should take it immediately. The agents of the Brantford factory and of the United States factories are al-