

way interested in that direction. Of our industrial population at least 40,000 are engaged in the lumber trade, and to them a high tariff would be no sort of advantage, but rather a serious impediment, as tending of necessity largely to increase the cost of producing lumber. The industrial class also comprises 10,000 or 12,000 blacksmiths, engaged in serving the agricultural population; and a very large number of carpenters, and innumerable other trades of similar character. Far be it from me, however, to deny justice to a minority. But on the other hand there must be the most imperative necessity demonstrated to exist before we can think of sacrificing the prosperity of nineteen-twentieths of the population for that of such a small minority. And when these gentlemen allege that this is a slaughter market, and that American manufacturers make sacrifices for the sake of selling here, I do not pretend to deny that this aggravates the case of our manufacturers; but I may state that the evidence laid before us does not bear out their assertions, at any rate, to anything like the extent to which they have been made. There is no doubt that immediately the cost of production in America became cheapened there was an increase in the number of articles brought into this country; and that this circumstance, although advantageous to the bulk of our people, did press with severity on a certain portion of our manufacturers. But there is also no doubt that a very considerable number of our manufacturers, embracing three or four of the most important trades, and employing a very large proportion of the number I have mentioned as desiring protection, do not dread American competition at all, but are afraid of British manufacturers. And this is a point which the House would do well to bear in mind—that a good deal of the American competition is not the competition of American with Canadian industries, but American with British manufacturers, the Canadian consumer being benefitted by the operation. Moreover, we must recollect that when, as has been the case recently, there has been a very large reduction in the demand for articles of foreign production, there will naturally be a large reduction in the demand for home manufactures also. When the state of things is such that we find that the importation of articles in the 17½ per cent. list (which contains the bulk of the articles with which our home manufactures come into competition) is reduced in six months to the amount shown by the