

Western Ontario would be in regard to the removal of this tax—they have not yet been consulted on the subject—but, as one of them, speaking only for myself, I do not believe it does us any good. I believe the only use of the wheat duty has been as an excuse to induce us to submit to other taxes which have been very burdensome to farmers as a class throughout the country. If it had not been for the bait of the wheat duty and the barley duty held out to us in 1878, we would never have submitted to allow ourselves to be taxed for the building up of large manufacturing concerns in other parts of the country. It was only these two taxes that induced the farmers to accept the other taxes. It was only the promise that was made that we would obtain benefit from these two taxes that induced us to accept the National Policy. We have found, from a long experience of six years, that this policy has not raised the price of grains. The price of grains has, since the adoption of the National Policy, gone down almost continuously; at any rate, it is lower now than ever before; and we believe that, as far as that tax is concerned, the policy has been a humbug and we would suffer very little from its abolition. I have no doubt that, after the subject has been further debated in the House, the farmers will express some opinion in regard to it, and that will deserve the fullest consideration; but, speaking for myself, I do not believe it does us any good whatever, or that we would lose one cent a bushel by its abolition.

MR. HESSON. What is the price of wheat in Chicago to-day?

MR. CASEY. I have not a newspaper by me from which to make the quotation. Perhaps the hon. member when he follows me, will give the prices in Chicago and the prices here to-day, and then he will have a comparison. I want to say something about the most remarkable document which has ever been laid before this House, the report on the manufacturing interests in existence in Canada by Mr. Blackeby and Mr. Willis. I find that the enquiry originated in a memorandum by the hon. the Minister of Finance dated in May last, saying that he had long considered "the desirability of procuring reliable information"—reliable information, remember—"as to the manufacturing industries in existence in Canada, as regards the number of persons employed, the amount of capital invested, the output thereof, the date of establishment and the progress of the several factories, and, in fact, all particulars that will be of use in aiding the Government in legislation with reference thereto." It seems the Government intended to propose some legislation in regard to these industries during the coming year, and they wanted information to base that legislation on. Of course they wanted full and accurate information. He recommends that Mr. Blackeby be appointed because he is a man "who has shown himself fully qualified for the work." We will see how full and accurate the information is, and how fully Mr. Blackeby has shown himself qualified for the position he undertook. He occupies about 40 pages of a pamphlet of 200 pages, in dealing with the industries of Ontario and Quebec, the rest being taken up with the industries of the Maritime Provinces. Now, Mr. Speaker, this may give us a hint as to the fullness of the information obtained by Mr. Blackeby. One-fifth of this book is occupied by statistics regarding Ontario and Quebec, the two great manufacturing Provinces of the Dominion, the two Provinces which outweigh the others as greatly in manufactures, almost, as they do in population. One-fifth of the report only is taken up with these two great Provinces, while four-fifths are given up to industries in the Maritime Provinces, principally in the city of St. John and neighborhood. It is clear, then, that the information obtained about Ontario and Quebec cannot be as full as that obtained about the industries in the other Provinces.

Now, Mr. Blackeby begins by a sort of general observation on the country. He admits, to start with:

"It is true, that in some industries, the privilege of supplying the Canadian market for manufactured goods with the produce of our own mills, has been too largely taken advantage of by capitalists, anxious to put their money to a profitable use, and in this way the market (which, although a growing one, has its limits), was, for a time, unduly stocked with these classes of goods."

This is a very pretty and polite way of putting it. They were too anxious to take advantage of the privilege of supplying our people with home manufactured goods at high prices, and they overstocked the market; in other words he admits there was an unwholesome boom in manufactures which produced a plethora, and which is the cause of the depression now. This information is thoroughly reliable, of course, because it is the Finance Minister himself who has transmitted it to us. He goes on to say:

"It is now a question of a very short time when, having a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the people, manufacturers in Canada will be prepared to supply, through the labor of our own mechanics and operatives, all the demands of the market, at a profit alike to themselves and the districts in which they are located."

It must have been from Mr. Blackeby that the right hon. Premier obtained his now celebrated expression "ere long." Why, Sir, when the National Policy was first adopted we were told its effects were to follow immediately; that we were to have manufactures the day after, that the tall chimneys were to spring up, manufactures were to boom, and everybody was to make increased profits. But, now Mr. Blackeby says "it is a question of but a short time" when all this will take place. We have had the National Policy in force for six years and now "ere long" we are going to get the benefits of it. Then he tells us something of his methods. He says:

"It must not be supposed that the statistics given are the total figures of any particular class of work or any particular section of Ontario or Quebec."

He has been appointed to get full and thorough information upon which to base legislation, and he says it must not be supposed that his statistics are full in regard to any section. Oh, no. And then:

"In the limit of time given only sufficient factories could be visited to give a proper idea of what the general state of trade was in the several classes and the various districts."

Of course, the factories that he visited in order to get a "proper idea" of the state of trade naturally would not be those which were not doing well. In order to produce a "proper idea" he would visit those which were doing very well, and which have increased their products since 1878:

"Many towns having large industrial works have not been visited at all."

There is his own confession, the confession of the Government's agent:

"For instance, Almonte, which may almost be considered as the seat of the woollen trade in Canada, was not visited owing to lack of time, and other large industrial towns do not figure in this report."

The seat of the woollen trade in Canada was not visited! Would it not give a "proper idea" of the state of that trade if the seat of the woollen industry had been visited? I am inclined to fancy it was that reason and not lack of time, which prevented its being visited. It would seem from the terms of this report that the woollen trade in the seat of that industry cannot be as flourishing as it was some time ago, or Mr. Blackeby would have found some time to visit it. Why, Sir, he has been to Aylmer, Simcoe, Tilsonburg, and various other small towns in my county and neighborhood that are not the seat of any particular industry. He has been to all sorts of places in Ontario and Quebec. He has been everywhere he thought there was anything flourishing, but he had not time to go to Almonte, which was "the seat of the woollen industry of Canada," and he goes on to confess to us: