

hon. gentleman, and perhaps a more serious objection in a certain way. One of the most serious objections to the protective system followed by the hon. gentleman is this: that it induces the investment of capital in industries which are not congenial to the soil, which cannot stand by themselves, which have to be supported at all times out of the taxes of the people. I can point out to the hon. gentleman a number of instances of that kind; I will only take one or two. Take, for instance, the coal oil industry. Coal oil is taxed in this country $7\frac{1}{2}$ cents a gallon. Last year we imported \$430,000 worth, and we paid just as much in duty as the value of the goods, that is to say, we paid a duty of 100 per cent. Well, as a revenue tariff, this would be outrageous; in fact, if the duty were decreased by one-half or two-thirds, we would have more revenue than we have now on coal oil. This is not, therefore, a revenue tariff, it has been imposed altogether for protection, and for nothing else. Even yet, though there is a duty of 100 per cent on that article, that is not all. Other obstacles have been put in the way of the importation of coal oil, amounting to as much, perhaps, as the present tariff. It is calculated upon good authority, that the protection afforded to coal oil is 200 per cent, at least. Well, Sir, it is a fact well known, that Canadian oil cannot be produced as cheaply as American oil. But what has been the effect of all this? Why, that by the protection which has been given against foreign oil, you have induced the investment in the oil regions of a million dollars in capital, and now it is said that you cannot remove that protection because that capital will be wiped out. That may be true, but if it be true that Canadian coal oil cannot maintain itself against American competition without protection, I say it is all the more an evidence of the pernicious effect of a protective system; the pernicious effect is this, that you cannot remove the protection without, to some extent, endangering a large portion of the capital of the country. Well, I admit that is always a grave issue, and a thing which has to be carefully considered. I am clear upon one thing, and that is that such protection, such taxation as this, is unjust; but, at the same time, I am also free to say that, though the tariff in this respect has to be reformed, it has to be reformed cautiously, so as to effect the minimum of injury, and, if possible, no injury at all. I would not be the man to say, much as I deprecate the protective system, much as I believe it to be injurious to the well-being of the country—I would not be the man to say that it should be wiped out at one fell swoop.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. LAURIER. I am surprised at these exclamations. I say that protection should not be removed at one fell swoop; but the

difference between the hon. gentleman and myself is that they are not prepared to remove it even at a gradual swoop. I would have no fault to find with these amendments to the tariff so far as they go; I would have no fault to find if the Government did not tell us that they are going to maintain the principle of protection. If they were proposing gradually to remove or abolish the principle of protection, I would be with them, but that is not their policy. As the hon. member for West Assinibola (Mr. Davin) knows very well, this is not a system of scientific protection, it is protection without any science in it at all. What I say about coal oil I also say about the iron duty. How many years is it now? Six or seven years, since the iron duties were remodelled, remodelled to be increased by 50, 60 and sometimes 100 per cent. Now, with what object? With the object of developing in this country the manufacture of pig iron and of bar iron. No one has forgotten, I am sure, the great flourish of trumpets with which those duties were heralded into the world; no one has forgotten, I am sure, the language of Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper on that occasion. We know how Sir Charles Tupper rolled figures off his tongue, but he never rolled them off as he did on that occasion. Why, we almost heard the roar of the smelting furnaces, we almost smelt the smoke of the charcoal that was to be used in them. There were to be 200,000 men employed in that industry. Well, after six or seven years, what has been the result? The same company who received that amount of protection are again coming to the Government, and, like Oliver Twist, they are asking for more. It has only whetted their appetite. If you increase the tariff, as I hope it will not be increased, the consequence will be that in a few days, in a few years, you will have more capital invested in this industry, and you will not be able to remove that protection, because they will come here and say: Don't touch us; if you do, you will wipe away all the capital we invested in these industries. Now, I want to prevent these consequences to ourselves. I say that a system is false which can produce such results as these. But that is not all. There is something worse than all that in a protective tariff. We charge upon the protective tariff—and no one knows it better than the hon. the Minister of Finance—that it is base and degrading. Under such a system the Government deliver themselves into the hands of masters who are stronger than they, and who hold them fast in submission; and whenever the Government make some attempt at rebellion, immediately their masters take them by the throat and force them back into bondage; and then when they have been forced back into bondage, covered with confusion and shame, they would have the people believe that their attempts at freedom were not genuine, not sin-