

Cabinet must be more nearly right, according to the views entertained by hon. gentlemen opposite, than the ex-Minister of Finance; therefore, I conclude that the Provincial Treasurer is right, and that the population of Ontario is increasing; and, as an additional fact in support of that, I would allude to the evidence furnished by the report of the Bureau of Industries in Ontario, which is most damaging to their utterances on this subject. I would request hon. gentlemen to look to the information supplied by that report, as to the population in their own counties, before they undertake to publish to the world that the population of the Province is decreasing to such an alarming extent. I would specially suggest to the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) to look into that report, by which he will find that, under the operation of the National Policy there has been a very large measure of prosperity in the county of Norfolk. Of course, it is a fact that we cannot expect him to admit in this House; but we can expect these hon. gentlemen not to state what investigation on their part would prove to be untrue. Now, there is another question to which I wish to allude. I am aware that when any resident of the Province of Ontario declares that in this country the consumer does not pay the import duty charged upon coal he is sneered at by the friends of the hon. gentlemen opposite; but, Sir, I am one of those who believe that the consumer in Ontario does not pay the duty on coal, and I will tell you why. I listened with a great deal of attention to the argument used by Sir Charles Tupper in this House two or three Sessions ago on this subject. The idea was new to my mind, and though not altogether converted then to the fact, I believe to-day that the consumer in the Province of Ontario does not pay the duty on coal. In support of this, I wish to refer to what occurred during last summer in the city of Philadelphia. The inhabitants of that city complained that though they were on the brink of the mining district, they had to pay 65 cents a ton more for their coal than the people of Boston, hundreds of miles away, and quite as much as the inhabitants of Canada, whose coal was subject to heavy freight charges, and to a duty of 50 cents a ton. In Philadelphia the coal companies have no competition and they charge as they please, while in Boston and other eastern cities they are compelled to keep their prices low, to meet the English coal and that from Nova Scotia. It thus happens that notwithstanding the distance of 800 miles, which is against us as compared with Philadelphia, and in spite of the duty, we secure our coal at as low a figure as do the Philadelphians, whose nearness to the mines should be a point in their favor. Now, Sir, in the month of June last a committee of the Philadelphia city council was appointed to investigate the charges of discrimination of rates made against coal and coal carrying companies by one of the city papers. The enquiry is of interest to the Canadians, chiefly because it elicited evidence sustaining the view I have expressed. President Roberts, of the Pennsylvania Railway, in a letter dated 20th June, to the committee of investigation, says:

"The rates that are now charged by our company for carrying soft coal are made for the purpose of meeting the competition in the various markets in which coal is introduced."

And he defends this discrimination by saying:

"Pennsylvania does not suffer by it, but on the contrary is benefited by it, because without it coal would be no cheaper to local consumers, while with it a large force of coal miners and other operatives are added to the wealth producers of the State."

Mr. James H. Gowan, one of the managers of the Reading Co., also wrote to the committee, and this is what he says:

"It has been customary, for the past thirty or forty years, to allow drawbacks on coal bought for exportation. I cannot say to what extent the custom prevails now, but I can say that only for it Pennsylvania coal would not have been introduced at all into many places where it now is. The price of coal is regulated by competition, and we have to do business like other people; no man is in business who does not do the best he can for himself, and companies exist to make money."

Mr. Wood (Brockville).

Now, one of the strongest arguments against the National Policy made use of by the free traders in the Province of Ontario, is that the poor man has to pay 50 cents a ton on the coal he uses, and as coal is one of the necessaries of life, that is to the workingmen of this country a very strong argument against the National Policy. But it is a fact in proof of what I have read, that in towns along the River St. Lawrence, which are separated from the United States only by the river, the people pay no more for their coal than do the people of the towns in the State of New York, on the other side of the river. Last Saturday coal was \$6 a ton in the city of Ogdensburg, and the same price in Prescott, just across the river. I mention this to show that in these matters, which are constantly alluded to by hon. gentleman opposite, the facts do not bear them out; and I bring forward this evidence with pleasure, as it is in strict confirmation of the very elaborate argument made use of by Sir Charles Tupper in this House. Now, there is another matter about which hon. gentlemen opposite have made a good deal of capital. They pose now as the friends of the workingmen. Well, Sir, it did occur to me that whatever might be the assumption of hon. gentlemen opposite as to the stand they have taken with reference to any particular class, they could hardly have the "cheek," if I may use the expression, to stand up here as the friends of the workingman. My opinion is that the workingmen of this country have a very lively recollection of the kind of affection hon. gentlemen opposite entertained for them in days gone by. It is within the recollection of every one in this House that the working classes, between the years 1873 and 1878, were in a state approaching poverty. It is a fact that they were crying aloud for assistance from this Government. It is a fact that the associations of workingmen throughout the country were pointing out, as did the manufacturers and agriculturists, and the representatives of all the industrial classes, the remedies which they required. But that Government turned a deaf ear to everything they said, and very arrogantly gave them to understand that they knew not whereof they were speaking. Now hon. gentlemen opposite say: You told us you were going to restore this country to prosperity. You told us that your leader would exercise his magical wand, of which the people at that time knew nothing, if they would only restore him and his friends to power. Have you done it they say? Have you been able to straighten out this difficulty under which this or the other industry is laboring and restore prosperity to it? There can be nothing more absurd than this. During the period of depression previous to 1878, it was not the representative men of the Conservative party who alone were making these statements. They were but giving voice to what emanated from the people. But at the present time there are no representations of that kind coming to the Government. This is a distinction which I wish to point out to hon. gentlemen opposite. From every place in which there was an industry of any kind previous to 1878, there came down to the city of Ottawa, to the Finance Minister of the day, deputations and petitions, representing to him the particular grievances of which they complained and telling him all they wanted was simply the opportunity of laying before him their case; but in no single instance did he accede to their wishes. It was in that state of things, upon that case, that the present First Minister took the position that these people should be heard. We were then simply giving voice to the wail that came up from the people all over the country, and the sympathy the First Minister entertained for them found practical expression in that now historical resolution, known as the National Policy. And the National Policy which he gave to the people is just as popular in Canada, just as strong in the hearts of the people to-day, as it was in 1878. It is the merest folly of hon. gentlemen opposite to compare the