

in free. These wire nails are an article that go into very general use and it is desirable that they should be made as cheap as possible. Of course no one would desire to extinguish this industry. Any one can see that they will have less margin at 60 cents than at \$1. But, after all, we do not anticipate the evil results that hon. gentlemen seem to fear. But I think that we must not anticipate, or look upon the matter as gloomily from the manufacturers' standpoint as my hon. friends opposite do. I confess it is a very large cut, but it is made in the interest of the consumers.

Mr. FOSTER. It would be a great pity if my hon. friend, in keeping the duty ostensibly with the view of maintaining the industry, were to miss it by a very small amount. You see in that case you would not be giving the consumer the full benefit, you would give him that if you took the duty off entirely, and you would be running the risk of shutting up the industry. Now, if you come to the difference between three-fifths and four-fifths, it is so infinitesimally small as applied to the general consumer, the average consumer of nails, the farmer, the average consumption of nails by him is so small that it is a small amount at best. Suppose he paid it all, or suppose he gained it all, it would be but a very small amount. But, again, you simply reduce that by one-fifth, and I venture to say that it won't appreciably lower what the farmer, the ultimate consumer, has to pay. I venture to say that nearly the whole of that, may be the whole of it, will go into the pockets of the middlemen between the manufacturer and the ultimate consumer, whilst this small amount to the ultimate consumer may be that which makes the difference between actually being able to carry on the industry, and ruin and loss. The manufacturer has to bear the whole of that. The small amount of one-fifth would be, I am satisfied, taken up by the middlemen. I do not believe that the average consumer of the article would feel the burden relaxed by a single feather's weight. My information is that it will not be possible for this industry to exist on present rates of wages, if this reduction is made. My hon. friend said: But the rod comes in free. I think my hon. friend will know, if he has inquired into this matter, that it has often occurred that they will sell you nails at Pittsburg cheaper than they will sell you the rods out of which you are to draw the wire out of which you are to make the nails. That has occurred again and again, it is one of the peculiarities of this iron business. It would be a great pity if my hon. friend strained his free trade or revenue views in the least with the idea of making the industry self-sustaining, if he failed to sustain it by omitting to put on one-fifth of a cent, which my information is would enable the industry fairly well to exist. Besides, if my hon. friend

makes a reduction in reference to imports, he is favouring entirely the United States. The whole bulk of our nails come from the United States, and not from Great Britain at all. About a quarter of a million pounds of nails come in from the United States.

Mr. TAYLOR. I want to say to the hon. member for Essex (Mr. McGregor), who appears to want to get nails cheap in this country, that the Canadian farmer to-day is buying his nails by the keg cheaper than the American farmer across the line. I made an inquiry a few weeks ago in a hardware store in Cleveland, and compared with our prices in Gananoque, I find that our prices are lower than they are in Cleveland. It may be that under the three-fifths, all these large mills that draw their own wire and make the larger sizes of nails, may go on; but I can assure the hon. gentleman that it is not so with the industry at Gananoque and others similarly situated throughout the country, that have to import and pay freight on their wire to their factories. They have plant there now running, they have experienced men running these machines, and it is simply a question of throwing it all into the hands of the big men and closing up these smaller establishments that are filling a gap in this country. The large ones may exist, but as my hon. friend said, you can buy large-sized nails at Pittsburg, and they will give quotations to export them cheaper than they will for the rods.

Mr. MCGREGOR. If they keep on, they will give them to us for nothing.

Mr. TAYLOR. They will do anything they can to close up Canadian industries, and if these smaller shops are closed, such as the one in Gananoque that employs ten or fifteen hands, and several others like it in the country, the bigger ones will amalgamate with the large concerns over in the United States, and they will have the same prices in Canada as in the United States. I can assure the hon. gentleman that the Canadian farmer to-day is getting his nails cheaper than the American farmer.

Mr. WOOD (Hamilton). I would like it if the Government could see their way to make the duty three-quarters of a cent a pound. I think that would give general satisfaction. I do not want to urge them to do it, but in the interest of the nail factories of which we have several in the west, who are doing a very large business, I would be pleased if the Government could do so. It would enable these factories to carry on their business.

Mr. MCGREGOR. The consumer has been paying for a long time a large amount of duty on these nails, and if you are going to cut at all, I think we ought to say two-fifths instead of three-fifths and give the consumer a little chance. The manufacturers have been protected for many years.