

hand over that extraordinary power even to a Liberal Government, knowing well, as they do, that if the Conservative party came into office, they could not, if consistent, do other than charge them with having the power to coerce any manufacturer in this country and make him their slave.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have only to thank the House for the very patient hearing they have given me, and I hope that hon. gentlemen will see their way to withdraw or modify that proposition. The House is a unit in favour of striking down every combine in Canada; but the House, I hope, is not a unit in favour of adopting the means prescribed by hon. gentlemen opposite.

Mr. McMILLAN. Mr. Speaker, in rising to address the House on this very important occasion, let me say that there is one thing we can claim, and that is that this is the tariff of the Finance Minister and his colleagues, and not the tariff of the Manufacturers' Association of the province of Ontario. The ex-Finance Minister (Mr. Foster) has stated that during the past nine months a flaming sword has been held over the heads of the business men of Canada by the present Government. Does he know that a fiery sword was held over him when he was trying to revise his tariff in 1894, and that it was wielded with effect, for the next morning after that tariff was brought down to the House, a clerical error was found in the items of democrat wagons and starch, and before the tariff was passed, there were over a hundred more items discovered in which there were clerical errors. But not one single clerical error has been found in the present tariff during the time of this debate.

I have been very much amused by the various lines of argument advanced during this debate. The first thing we were told was that this tariff was illegal and unconstitutional, such a tariff as would not have been brought down by any Government in any civilized country. But that line seems to have been abandoned, and I have been wondering whether or not the hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) has got new light. The line now taken is that we are giving something to England for nothing. Can it be possible that the ex-Finance Minister (Mr. Foster) has taken advice and has learned that the Government are perfectly correct in the position they have taken, that this preferential tariff does not affect the favoured-nation-clause in any respect, and that it can only take effect as regards the nations which enjoy the advantages of that clause, when they give Canada corresponding advantages?

I was rather amused at the slick way in which the hon. gentleman who last spoke tried to get around the reduction of duty on binder twine. He said the farmers were not going to be benefited by our taking off the duty of 12½ per cent. Well, if that duty

were of no benefit to the manufacturers, why should it remain there? I say that we ought to get rid of every duty which gives any opportunity to anybody to take an unfair advantage of the community; and I further say that the manufacturers of binder twine have not been injured, because not only the raw material which went into the composition of that article, but the oil, coal and all the machinery for making it comes in free, so that in reality a benefit has been conferred upon the manufacturers. When hon. gentlemen opposite talk of binder twine, they ought to think of that page in the history of binder twine made in the Kingston Penitentiary, which was laid bare to the House last session, and which ought to make every Conservative blush with shame.

Then we were told that it was unworthy the dignity of a country like Canada to bring down a tariff of this description. And we were criticised for the small amount of duty taken off coal oil. Well, we know it took a considerable length of time to bring the tariff up to what it was under the late Government, and that it would be in the interests of the country that that tariff should be removed slowly and gently. As one who has been a farmer for the last forty-three years, I accept this instalment in good faith, as the beginning of the end, and I believe that the Government will do yet all it has promised. The Government never promised to take the duties off all at once; but they promised to give us free trade as hon. gentlemen opposite say it was given in England. How was it given in England? The agitation for the abolition of the corn laws began in 1824. The first line of duties, apart from the corn laws, was removed in 1845, when the duties on over 300 articles were reduced or abolished. In 1846 another list of duties was abolished, and so it went on until 1874, when the last duties were removed. Give the Government of Canada an equal length of time, and I have no doubt they will gradually pull down the tower of high duties built in this country, and in so doing will act both in the interests of the people and of the manufacturers. Why, in England the very same cries went out that are going out here to-day. There the alarm was raised that the people of Germany and France and other countries would manufacture the goods that would be consumed in England, but the events have falsified these predictions, and to-day England is one of the most prosperous countries on the face of the earth.

Now, let us take that question of rice that is so much talked about. 13,000,000 pounds of rice came into this country, and the duty paid on that rice, which was to be cleaned, amounted to \$40,000, because there was 3-10ths of a cent of duty only, and that left nearly 1 cent per pound upon the rice to the manufacturer. But now that the duty is ¾ of a cent per pound,