

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

SPEECH OF HON. MR. ROSE ON THE TARIFF.

(Specially reported for the Montreal Gazette.)

OTTAWA, July 12, 1866.

On the order of the day being called for the House to go into Committee of the whole on Ways and Means, and the motion of Mr. McGivern in amendment thereto,

Hon. Mr. ROSE said—Mr. Speaker, in entering upon the discussion of the important propositions submitted to this House by the Hon. the Minister of Finance, I shall endeavor to abstain as far as possible from any observations of a political nature, such as have been made during the debate that has occupied our attention during the past two days, and to confine myself strictly to a consideration of what these propositions are and of their probable effect. What then Sir, is the principal proposition which has been submitted by the Minister of Finance? and in considering this question, it is necessary that we should refer back in order to see how far the changes he proposes in the customs and excise are called for by the extent of the wants of the public service for the current year. The Minister of Finance estimates his outlay, according to his own showing, and including a million and a half for the Militia, at \$12,376,000 for the ensuing year, and estimates the revenue under the existing law, supposing there was no change in customs or excise, at \$11,420,000, leaving a deficiency under the existing state of things of \$950,000 to be provided for. This, then, is the extent of the deficit for the current year under the present tariff of customs and excise. I separate this proposition entirely from the one to meet the floating debt of the Province between this and the 1st of January next, and which amounts to the sum of \$5,000,000. It is not proposed to meet any part of this out of the changes proposed to be made in the tariff. These changes are simply and solely for the pur-

pose of meeting the assumed deficit of \$950,000 in the year's services. Now, in order to meet that deficit, my hon. friend proposes to add, by way of excise and increased duties upon the various articles enumerated in his speech, the sum of \$2,294,000 to the revenue; but as that would give him a surplus of \$1,340,000, he proposes to reduce the existing scale of duties on manufactured goods and other articles, so as to lessen the revenue from them by \$1,300,000, leaving him an actual increase in the whole year's income, as compared with the past year, of about \$1,000,000. In other words, in order to obtain the additional sum of \$950,000, it is proposed to make changes in the tariff which will effect a volume of taxation to the extent of \$3,350,000. (Hear, hear.) He makes propositions which will affect and disturb almost every interest in the country, whether commercial, industrial, or agricultural. Now, the object I have in view in addressing the House is to see how far it might not be practicable to obtain the object the Minister of Finance has in view—namely, to provide this sum of \$950,000—in a way which shall not disturb so widely these varied and important interests, because his propositions are not limited to providing the \$950,000 additional revenue, but they will, as I have said, interfere with the whole volume of trade of the country, by changes of Taxation to the extent of \$3,500,000. (Hear, hear.) I need not, I am sure, make any observations to hon. members of this House in order to prove to them the very serious injury which sudden and oft-repeated changes of any kind in the tariff do to the commercial, the industrial and the agricultural interests of the country. It is quite impossible to bring about changes of this nature—especially when, as I shall attempt to show, it is utterly impossible that these changes can be permanent—without doing