

than the year 1878, and yet hon. gentlemen do not say that the home manufacturers were driven to the wall in those years by excessive importations. The fact is that home and foreign products are, to a great extent, complements of each other. They are alike necessary to complete the assortment of the necessaries and the luxuries of life in this country. When the purchasing power of the community is from any cause diminished it effects this assortment all round. When there is a diminution of imports, there is also a diminution in the demand for home manufactured articles; and the years of the smallest imports are also the years in which home manufacturers are in least demand. It is because the same causes are operating with reference to each. The member for West Toronto has said that the question of Free Trade and Protection are not put in issue by this Tariff. That we all admit that there must be Customs duties, and it is a simple question as to the articles upon which those duties shall be imposed. I quite admit that the issue between us is not whether Customs duties shall or shall not be abolished. No one has spoken in favor of Free Trade on this side in the sense of wholly removing the shackles of commerce. It is not a question as between direct and indirect taxation, and the hon. member is only dealing candidly with this side of the House when he recognizes that fact. I have never hesitated to say, if a tax of 20 per cent. is necessary to meet the necessities of the Government, then I am ready to favor a tax of 20 per cent. If we cannot get on with less than 25 per cent, then I am in favor of 25 per cent. I set out with this proposition, that taxation in no form can in itself be anything else than a burden on the people; that it should be imposed only for public purposes and used only for the public benefit. There are certain canons which we ought to observe, I think, in the imposition of taxes. They should be imposed so as to take as little money as possible from the people beyond what finds its way into the public Treasury. It should be distributed fairly as between the Provinces; it should be borne by the population in proportion to their ability to pay; it should be so imposed so as to interfere with commerce as little as possible. Now, in our estimation all burdens we impose on the population who are expected to bear them, they are not benefits. It is not money sent into the public Treasury. It is not a tax to be justified by the benefit obtained. It is not applied in the public interest, but it is a tax imposed on one section of the population for the benefit of another section.

Mr. ORTON. I would ask whether it is not better, then, to propose a tax that gives the benefit to the farm producer?