

people. I am well aware that this question is viewed from different standpoints of interest with regard to the rate of duty which should be imposed. The farmers and the labouring men, who form the larger part of our population, claim that, in justice to them, the duty should be entirely removed. On the other hand, the producers and the refiners of coal oil in this country desire that the tariff should remain as it is, on the ground that if the duty were reduced in any particular, such reduction would wipe their industry out of existence.

A just and proper appreciation of this motion involves a consideration of three important points. In the first place, to give the farmers and labourers and the poorer classes good oil at a cheap price; in the second place, to give the purchaser and refiner reasonable protection; and in the third place, to give the Government a fair and reasonable revenue. In discussing the demands and claims of the first named class, the farmers and labourers, for free oil, for which they have been asking for many years, I believe I give expression to the sentiments of hon. gentlemen on both sides when I claim that there is not a class of people more deserving of encouragement and sympathy than the toiling, industrious tillers of Canadian soil. Surely a class of people which composes half the population of this country, which furnishes 25 per cent of the traffic upon our railways, which furnishes $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the trade upon our canals, and one-half the tonnage of Canadian-built ships—surely this class cannot have a subordinate place in the affections of the Canadian people or in the considerations of a wise Government. It should be the desire of hon. members of this House to give cheap and good oil to our consumers. It may be inferred from this expression that we are not getting from the Canadian producer good coal oil at a cheap price at present. Regarding that, with all due respect to the enterprising men who are interested in this important industry, and with due deference to the statements we have seen in the newspapers and the claims these gentlemen are making, throughout the length and breadth of Canada, that the coal oil produced in Canada is equal to and, in some respects, superior to the American article. I beg to say that I have had something to do for thirty years in American and Canadian coal oil, and I have yet to see a gallon of Canadian oil equal in quality to the American. It blacks the chimneys, it blacks the ceiling, it emits a very offensive odour, and whilst our Canadian producers claim that it lasts longer, I claim that if their oil will give the same candle power, the same brilliancy as American oil, it will be consumed as rapidly. I can put this matter in no stronger light than by quoting a remark made with respect to the quality of Canadian oil by the hon. member for the county of Hunting-

don (Mr. Scriver) some years ago. He said that the Canadian oil was not as good as the American, and any one who had used the American would not use the Canadian article. And what was true at that time, I claim, is mainly true to-day. I hold in my hand a letter bearing date of 7th inst., from a large coal oil dealer along the frontier between the United States and Canada in which he states that he cannot sell Canadian oil because its quality is so poor. I hold that if crude oil, produced in Canada is as good as the American article, then, certainly, we ought to get as good a refined article, and, if we do not get it, the refiners of this country are not entitled to the high protection which they have had. If the crude oil is imperfect, if it has qualities that cannot be eliminated and that prevent it being made into a good refined oil, then the industry does not deserve the encouragement and protection which it has had ever since the discovery of oil in this country.

In the next place, I will consider for a moment the price of Canadian as compared with the price of American oil. The consumers in this country claim that no satisfactory reason has been given why there should exist such a difference in the prices on this side and on the other. On investigation it will be found that the Canadians are paying full duty on what is imported from the United States as well as an equal sum on all the oil consumed and produced in Canada, making our light cost our consumers six cents per gallon more than it costs the consumers in the United States, whether they use Canadian or American oil. If it costs us very much more to produce our oil, that might be a reason for asking a higher price. I see by reports made by experts that the contract price for sinking wells in Canada at a distance of 400 or 500 feet, is only \$110 on the average. That is the statement made by a mining engineer representing gentlemen who are very much more interested in retaining the present duty upon coal oil. And, if you take the statements of the United States expenditure in connection with the sinking of oil wells, you will find that up to 1885 it cost an average of \$4,000 to sink each well. The wholesale price of oil on the American side is 8 16-100 cents per gallon. The Canadian article costs 15 cents per gallon. Therefore it is quite evident that our consumers are giving to the producers and refiners the full benefit of the duty of six cents per gallon. This duty represents as high an ad valorem rate upon American oil at its present price as a duty of 15 cents per gallon in 1877 on the price at that time. The argument used by the hon. member for Stanstead in 1877, and fully endorsed by the present Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright) was that, in consequence of the great burdens upon the people of this coun-