

injurious to a country. How, I would ask, could agricultural communities be injured by the formation of large towns? It is in such that farmers find their best market. If farmers take an intelligent view, they must see that their success greatly depends on the growth of large cities. When Montreal became as large as New York, and Toronto as large as Philadelphia, and when other large cities have arisen amongst us, would it not be all the better for the farming communities all round about them? Would it not enhance the value of farms and the price of farm products? It is true, as has been indicated by the Finance Minister, that in great centres of population is to be found a great deal of wickedness, a great deal that is wrong, but much also that is good and beneficent. But if these great centres were broken down and the population thereof dispersed among the agricultural populations with whom they would enter into competition, the consuming population would be so much decreased, and the producing population so much increased, that the farmer would sustain a two-fold injury. There is, I believe, a necessity for urban populations, and no class of men had a greater interest in the extension of these, than farmers.

Petroleum Duties.

Before sitting down, I wish to make reference to a matter with which my name has been associated in this House—that is, the action of the Government on the petroleum duties. The late Government, in fixing the tariff of the Dominion in 1868, thought it wise to place what seemed to be a very high duty on oil—15 cents per gallon, with 5 cents excise duty. I do not think that was objected to at the time by any person in the House; but some time subsequently, new and extensive discoveries in oil were made, better means for extracting it were also adopted, and the price had undergone a change since the time the duty was imposed, and that duty, which had formerly been a very fair one, afterwards became a very onerous one. Whether the Government at that time acted wisely or unwisely, I do not propose to discuss, but would merely state the fact.

Inaction of the Government in 1876.

In 1876, I felt it my duty to propose a reduction of the duty on coal oil from 15 cents per gallon to 7½ cents, leaving the excise tax exactly as before. The proposition, as made and explained by me, was intended to give protection of from 20 to 25 per cent. upon oil, according to the current prices at that time. It had been stated by an honourable member, in reply to my remarks that there was another charge of a cent which ought to be added. On calling at the office of the Inland Revenue, however, I found that my hon. friend was mistaken. The proposition to adjust the tariff was made by me with a sincere desire to obtain results—not for any honour which might attach to myself. I desired that members supporting the Government, should use all their influence to have the reduction quietly made, and offered to drop my resolution and leave the matter with them, if they could obtain the consent of the Government. I introduced my proposition to the House on the 3rd day of March, but I left it alone till the 31st, a period of four weeks, in order that every member might have an opportunity of investigating the matter. I certainly did not bring it forward with any desire to embarrass the Government, or to place the Government at a disadvan-