

was at its maximum in 1873-74, when it amounted to 113,797lbs. Since then there has been an annual decline until last year, when it amounted only to the nominal quantity of 8,630lbs." Thus, thanks to the increase of the duty on tobacco made in 1873-4 by this Government, they saw that the effect of the financial policy of this Government affected the cultivation of tobacco in the same manner as it did all our other industries. The result of the policy of this Government had been to kill this industry, and despite such result the Government insisted on maintaining their policy under the pretence that they could not afford to dispense with the revenue which could be obtained therefrom, when the actual revenue to be derived from the Canadian tobacco, as admitted by their own report, was taken only upon the small quantity of some 8,000 lbs. Now, the hon. the Minister of Justice affirmed it would be a loss to the revenue of the country to the extent he had mentioned. The Government was unjustifiable to paralyse this industry in the Province of Quebec, and all through the country when they saw the effect which this duty produced. He was surprised to hear the hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue, who had shown himself so particularly in favour of the people's interests, support the maintenance of this duty, when he knew himself that the quality and price of tobacco grown in this country was suited to the wants and means of the greatest portion of our population. The hon. gentleman made this distinction: he said that tobacco was more easily raised, and in better quality, in countries south of ours, and the farther south they went the superior became the quality of the tobacco grown. If such should be the case, was it not true that putting aside the duties on Canadian tobacco would not prohibit the importation of foreign tobacco into our own market. Why should they add to the difficulties of Canadian producers by putting them, with regard to taxes, on an equal footing with the producer of the foreign article? Why should not Canadian tobacco be made duty free, when this action did not virtually increase the revenue collected by the Government? The statement of the

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hon. gentleman (Mr. Laurier) as to the condition of the cultivation of tobacco in this country, as compared with that of other countries, went against his objection that the removal of the duty from Canadian tobacco would destroy the revenue which the Government expected to obtain from the duty levied on the foreign article, because such removal would be the equivalent of prohibition. It was clear, from the reports of the hon. gentleman himself, and from the experience which had been acquired, that the law which imposed this duty did not offer any compensating result. The only effect of such duty, besides depreciating the chances of growing tobacco in this country, was to establish a system of contraband, which was operating both against the farmers and the Government itself. The hon. gentlemen opposite were perfectly well aware that the instructions which were given to the Excise officers in the different districts, relating to the Excise duties on Canadian tobacco, gave those officers the liberty to act in the most arbitrary manner. It might happen that, on the eve of an election, a seizure would be made upon some implicated man in a township or parish, so as to keep him under the good will of the Department so long as the political need of the moment would require it. He remembered that last Session this matter was brought before the House, and the hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue of that day was asked to explain what had been done with regard to certain seizures made on the eve of a certain election, and which had been left suspended over the heads of the individuals concerned. The matter, if he was well informed, had only been settled after the election was over. This was only one of the inconveniences of the present system. To justify the injurious duty thus imposed, the hon. the Minister of Justice now pretended that the use of tobacco was injurious to the population, and that he would be disposed to raise even higher the duties on that article. This would certainly be great news to the people of the Province of Quebec, who had never imagined that the use of tobacco, as was customary in that Province, could have such an injurious