

times of great commercial expansion the home market of the United States takes nearly everything that is produced in that country; at all events, the amount they export, although absolutely large, is relatively very small. They exported in 1900 only three and one-half per cent of the manufactures and eight, or nine, or ten per cent of the agricultural products. Well, things will go on all right during a time of commercial expansion when the home market is capable of absorbing nearly the whole product, but when a time of depression comes, when the consuming power of the people of the United States is decreased, what will happen? A good deal will happen. Canada lies alongside of the United States, Canada is her best customer in manufactured goods, as the hon. member for North Norfolk truly says, Canada is her third best customer in all classes of goods. When the surplus of the United States comes to be dealt with, where will it be dealt with? It will be dealt with in Canada and Canada may reasonably expect in the first instance to be the dumping ground of the American surplus. Canada, to some extent, is the dumping ground of that surplus at the present time. It is argued bravely by some people in this country that it is a good thing for the people of Canada that Canada should be the slaughter market for the manufactures and agricultural products of the United States. The argument seems to be this: It is said that if these goods are sold in Canada at less than the cost of production we get them cheap and therefore, upon the old free trade argument of years ago, it must be a good thing for the Canadian people to buy these goods in the cheapest market. What if the advent of these goods into the Canadian market closes up Canadian factories? What if Canadian farmers leave their farms and go to the United States and find the employment which they cannot find at home? I believe that for another reason a policy of free trade such as was advocated years ago can never be an acceptable policy in Canada. Free traders in Great Britain, possibly men who might be described as doctrinaires so far as this country is concerned because they do not realize the conditions which prevail here, regret that Canada has not followed the example of the mother country and adopted free trade. It

seems to me that these gentlemen really do not know that of which they speak. If Canada had adopted the policy of free trade and opened her markets to the United States, our trade relations, bad as they are with the mother country, would be far worse, and further than that, I believe that the commercial supremacy of the United States which would undoubtedly then have prevailed in our markets would have been coupled eventually with political supremacy. Therefore, I do not think, looking at our situation, that we can ever have anything like a policy of free trade in Canada, and if we are going to adopt the policy of protection, let us have a declared and pronounced policy so that the people may know what to expect and let us adopt a policy which will adequately protect all the interests of the country.

During the past six years the government of the country has not declared its fiscal policy as it should have done. We have had no definite statement; no pronounced and declared policy. The Finance Minister, in 1897, told the people of this country that eternal vigilance was the price of protection. The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Rt. Hon. Sir Richard Cartwright) said that the ship's head was now turned towards the sea of free trade, and he was glad of it. The Prime Minister folded his arms in dramatic fashion since the commencement of this very session, and he told the people that he was glad that, having commenced his political life as a protectionist, he had now become a pronounced free trader. It is true that the Minister of Marine told the people of Maisonneuve two months ago that the Prime Minister was a protectionist, but still two months have intervened and the right hon. gentleman may have changed his opinions since. Cabinet ministers and their followers have given conflicting views from time to time on the question. Last session the Minister of Finance made an announcement which was regarded by some of his followers as a declaration that the tariff would be raised this session. The hon. gentleman from Alberta (Mr. Oliver) distinctly stated in this House that that was his construction of the remarks of the Finance Minister, and he was not corrected by any member of the government at that time. The Minister of Trade and Commerce