

Mr. STREET said the House had already granted a Committee to enquire into the best mode of encouraging the manufacturing interests, and he did not think the agricultural interests should be looked upon as in any way inferior. When the Committee had reported, however, the House could discuss the matter much more intelligently than they could at present. He did not think that the view taken by some that the agricultural interests of the country required no protection was correct, but they would discuss the matter much better after receiving the report of the Committee already established. It would then be for the House to decide what should be done, and the Government could then state what proposition they deemed it advisable to submit. He hoped the Committee would be constituted.

Mr. O'CONNOR would rather have spoken after receiving the report of the Committee, but could not allow the occasion to pass after the remarks of the mover. The County of Essex felt more sensibly than any other part of the country the want of protection and the agricultural societies were unanimously in favour of such protection.

Mr. MILLS said the matter had been taken up two years ago by the Government for the purpose of establishing a well defined national policy, and they then believed that a protective policy would coerce the United States into granting more liberal commercial terms. That policy had been reversed by the House, and the matter had now fallen into the hands of the members for Hamilton (Mr. Magill) and Leeds North and Grenville North (Mr. Jones). If those gentlemen were in favour of protection they ought to oppose all extension of public works, they ought to oppose the construction of the Pacific Railway and the enlargement of canals, because all those works tended to facilitate the intercourse between different countries. So long as Canada produced more than she required for her own consumption, the price would be regulated by foreign markets in spite of protection.

Mr. BODWELL did not propose to enter at length into the question of tariffs, but he could not allow the statements of the hon. member for Leeds North and Grenville North (Mr. Jones) to go unchallenged. It had been urged by the gentleman from British Columbia (Mr. De Cosmos) that the farmers of British Columbia desired a protective tariff upon agricultural products, but gentlemen must bear in mind that we had to look at the interests of the country at large. It would not do to press the interests of one section to the prejudice of other sections of the whole Dominion.

He would bear in mind that, while British Columbia and Ontario had a surplus of the products of the farm, their sister provinces, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, had to buy their bread; and even if it could be shown (which it could not) that Ontario and British Columbia would be benefitted by a high tariff upon agricultural products, a great injustice would be inflicted upon Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

The member for Leeds (Mr. Jones) had produced statistics to controvert the arguments of his friend from Waterloo South (Mr. Young), but he must see that while we, in common with the United States, exported a large surplus of grain to Europe, our markets

must be controlled by those markets; and while he quoted our importation of wheat at a value of \$671,760, he forgot to mention that we for the same period exported \$1,981,917, showing a balance of exportation over importation in the article of wheat alone of \$1,310,157.

The facts were that while we imported a quantity of inferior wheat from the Western States for milling purposes, it only had the effect of displacing that much of our own superior wheat, which we exported at a large profit, thus affording a cheaper living to the poorer classes, supplying them with a cheaper, though a wholesome, bread. Again, if he (Mr. Jones) would refer to the trade and navigation returns laid before the House the other day, he would see that we exported of agricultural products, and animals and their products, a value of \$22,436,071, being nearly four times as much as we imported of the same articles. The quotation of these articles alone was sufficient to show the futility of the hon. gentleman's arguments.

This whole agitation had originated with a few manufacturers who desired to obtain wealth at the expense of the many, and their specious arguments had succeeded in obtaining signatures to their petitions amongst the farming community, to a considerable extent, he admitted: the whole object being to fasten upon the country a system of tariffs at once prejudicial to the best interests of the country, and oppressive to the very class which had signed the petition, for it (the agricultural class) at the present moment was as prosperous as ever it had been, and no complaints had come up from it, and the farmers neither asked for nor required protection. Even if the scheme advocated could afford such protection, which he (Mr. Bodwell) denied, all they asked was a fair field and no favour.

The gentlemen who were moving in this matter boasted that they represented farming communities. Well, he would not say, as the member for Essex (Mr. O'Connor) had, that he represented the finest agricultural county in the Dominion, but he had the honour to represent a constituency which Mr. Brown when in England had declared to be the "garden of Canada," and he (Mr. Bodwell) thought he could speak with some authority upon the subject; and he felt certain, from experience of the general policy of free trade to which he adhered, but which he would not now discuss, there was nothing to be gained to the farmer by the imposition of duties upon agriculture.

Hon. Sir FRANCIS HINCKS called the attention of the mover to the fact that his motion was very different from what it had been when moved on a previous occasion. As to the appointment of the Committee for inquiry there could be no objection, but he objected to that part of the motion empowering the Committee to recommend any action in the matter.

Mr. JONES (Leeds North and Grenville North) agreed to have that part of his motion objected to struck out, leaving it a simple motion for the appointment of a committee of inquiry.

Mr. FERGUSON thought that the Committee would be of no possible use unless it could make recommendations. A deputation