

However, if there was on this vast globe a country where Protection could show its beneficial results, that country was the United States, with a territory including all kinds of soil, from which could be raised nearly all kinds of produce, favoured by all varieties of climate, and enjoying an inter-State trade more than ten times greater than her foreign commerce. Notwithstanding all those natural advantages, Protection had failed to secure permanent prosperity to the United States, or to shield that country against the strokes of a commercial crisis, the most severe, perhaps, that it had ever felt. Some hon. members had stated that the Americans, under a Protective policy, had considerably reduced their national debt. He had always thought this had been accomplished by taxation, but he was quite willing to admit that Protection and taxation were synonymous terms, and, consequently, meant the same thing. Their attention had also been invited to Old France, as being a prosperous nation under Protection. It was true that France had on the whole been Protectionist, but her prosperity was due to the activity, the working energies, and particularly the saving habits of her people, rather than to Protection. If she had adopted, forty years ago, the more enlightened principles in commercial matters of her great neighbour, England, she would be to-day a still richer nation. Her marine would be the double or the treble of what it was to-day; her manufactures would have been still more perfected by foreign competition; the cost of living would have been cheapened, and her numerous working classes would have lived more satisfied, contented and happy; and, above all, she might have been saved from some of those political revolutions which seemed to have become as periodical in that country as commercial crises elsewhere. His hon. friend from Maskinongé (Mr. Houde) quoted Colbert as a Protectionist. It was very well to quote great men when they wanted to point out the good they might have accomplished; but, surely, their errors ought not to be transformed into models to be followed. The initiative taken by Colbert did not altogether turn to the advantage of France; it was followed, a little later, by a series of re-

taliatory measures between France and Holland, which were considered as one of the principal causes of the war of 1672, which terminated in 1678, by the peace of Nimègues. He might add that, when Colbert lived, the principles of political economy were not so well understood as to-day; at all events, they were not studied as a science. But no one could deny the considerable progress of Free-trade principles in France within a certain number of years, and he remembered having read somewhere the report of a fact which was illustrative of that progress. In 1842, the cloth manufacturers of Elbœuf petitioned the French Government against an introduction into France of Belgian cloths, whilst, at the same time, the cloth manufacturers of Verviers were petitioning their Government against an invasion in Belgium of French cloths. But a few years afterwards, in 1866, the Board of Trade of Verviers solemnly placed the bust of Cobden, that apostle of Free-trade, in the chamber of their deliberations, and, in the year following, during the Universal Exhibition held in Paris, in 1867, the bust of the same great man was seen, crowning a pyramid of the products of that great city's manufactures. They all remembered the violent recriminations which were raised against the treaty negotiated by Cobden with Napoleon III. According to those clamours, the English manufacturers would crush the French, yet nothing of the kind took place, and the treaty had proved to be equally advantageous to both parties. But, if they noticed to-day a certain current of opinion in France inclining towards Protection principles, they saw, on the other hand, that there were groups of educated and distinguished men, and even of manufacturers, who were strongly advocating the principles of Free-trade, and he had no doubt that, before long, France would join hands with England, and become her commercial as well as her political ally. They had also been referred to Germany and invited to contemplate Bismarck, as being in favour of Protection. It was a wonder to no one that, in a country where military despotism was the governing rule, where political liberty was crushed under the iron heel of a despot, commercial liberty