

was right. I wish to ask him whether he thinks he would have any power at all under this resolution to exclude the goods of those countries.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order, order.

Mr. SPEAKER. I do not think that any question, even if proper notice has been given on the paper, would be in order which calls for an expression of opinion. The hon. gentleman's question would not at any time be in order.

#### WAYS AND MEANS—THE TARIFF.

House resumed adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Fielding:

That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair, for the House to go into Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. DOUGLAS. As a representative from one of the agricultural districts of the great North-west, I desire to address the House on the tariff in its relation to the farming interests of that country. My position perhaps is a little peculiar. In the west, the people were accustomed to call me a Patron Grit; and by and by, when we found that our presentation of policy secured a large support from the Liberal-Conservatives, I was wont to claim the title of Liberal-Conservative and Independent Patron Grit. I thus speak, as you see, for a mixed multitude in the far west, and I wish to draw your attention to the condition of the people there under the old tariff and their prospects under the new. Our people in the North-west have but little sympathy for the principle of protection. We have come by experience to learn this fact, that whatever protection may have done for the cities of the east, it has done very little for the wide prairies of the west, and is not of a nature to be of any benefit to our settlers out there in their particular calling. In making this statement, I am convinced that I have the support of a large number of Liberal-Conservatives in the country. Have we not had ample proof of this statement? The empty pockets of our people, their want of credit, the fact that they are handicapped by monopolies of various kinds—all these things have led them to change their faith and to look for help in some other direction. Under the old system, it was supposed that there should be a home market for the products of the people, but we have found by experience that the home market is a fallacy and a delusion, and to-day we find ourselves out in the wide world competing in a free trade market, so that the duty upon wheat and flour is no protection to the farmer whose market is not at home, but in free trade England. We have then to put to ourselves the question, who are our opponents in this free trade market? In the production of grain and beef and dairy products, who are those with whom we

have to compete in this great market? They are the producers of Europe and of Asia and the Argentine Republic and the United States. Under these circumstances, the western farmer is submitted to special difficulties. He has to stand shoulder to shoulder with the cheap labour of the world. I have some knowledge of the production of wheat in the far east, and I know that men can be employed there for sixpence a day, and such is the nature of the climate that they scarcely need a house to sleep in or clothing to protect them. In fact, six yards of cloth at 10 cents a yard would clothe half a dozen of them. In these countries, therefore, the farmer, who is producing grain for the British market, has a decided advantage over the western producer, living as we do in such a climate as we have in the North-west. I could easily show that at the prices in the North-west for clothing, it requires at the very least 120 bushels at 50 cents a bushel to clothe one of our farmers respectably. So that the eastern labourer has an advantage in the matter of clothing as well as in the expense of living. Clothing is more expensive in the North-west than it is even in Ontario, and the people of the east are better clothed than our people in the west.

Again, the odds are against the farmer in the west because of his great distance from the seaboard, which is a difficulty that cannot very well be overcome. The average haul for grain in the Argentine republic, now a strong competitor in the production of wheat, is only 50 miles, while we have a long and expensive haul, so that it really takes one bushel to pay for another in putting it on the market. It is a common thing for the farmers to say, when asked what a certain one is doing—Oh, he is farming on shares with the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Massey-Harris Company. And this is a difficulty that cannot easily be overcome.

Then, if you look at the cost of freight from Asia. Last October wheat was being brought from Bombay and from Guzzerat, according to the Bombay "Gazette," at 60 cents per ton, so that it is impossible, under these circumstances, for us to compete with people who enjoy such advantages in a great open free trade market. After the freight is paid and all the charges, the balance is exceedingly small which is left to the producer in the North-west.

I also wish to say a little about the disadvantages under which we labour in the grain trade. The fact is that the producer in the North-west to-day is very much in the position of a dumb beast of burden. He produces his grain, and he takes it to the market. He knows very well that he must be exceedingly civil and take precisely what is offered him or he may fare worse in consequence. We have combines in the buying, and we have also the mixing of grain, which

Mr. McNEILL.