

creased the price of wheat and other cereals, because Canada produces a surplus of agricultural products, and the price is regulated by the English market. Not so, however, with manufactured goods. Though I admit that the price of manufactured goods, even in this country, must be the price in England, still to this must always be added the cost of transportation, which is unavoidable, and the amount of duty which is avoidable.

Mr. FOSTER. All avoidable?

Mr. LAURIER. Yes, when it is raised, as you gentlemen are raising it, not for revenue, but simply to favour special interests.

Mr. FOSTER. Then it is not all avoidable.

Mr. LAURIER. But a protection tariff is avoidable. Of course there is a limit, and that is the necessity of the revenue. That, however, is not the limit set by the hon. gentleman. But we are told also that the prices of manufactured goods are being decreased. I have no hesitation in admitting that the prices of manufactured goods have decreased; but, even in the lines in which they have most decreased, the cost of transportation and the amount of the duty cause them to be, as I have stated, from 30 to 40 per cent more than the price of these goods in England. Now, Sir, if the tariff had operated the same all round; if it had affected the prices of agricultural products and manufacturing products alike; if it had either increased or decreased the prices of both, the position of the farmer would be better than it is. But, it is not so, as I have already said. The produce of the farmer has been driven to the lowest point, but what he has to buy is sold to him at an increased price as compared with the price in England. What is the lesson to be deduced from this state of things. It is this: (and this is the proposition we rely upon on this side of the House) as the price of agricultural products has been reduced to the lowest point, it should be the aim of the tariff to reduce the prices of manufactured goods also to the lowest point. The farmer is bound by his circumstances to sell in the freest and cheapest market; so also ought he to be privileged to buy in the cheapest market consistent only with the imposition of such duties as are necessary for raising the revenue of the country. That is the proposition on which we stand, and it is a proposition perfectly fair, perfectly just, perfectly equitable—so fair, so just, so reasonable and so equitable, that the Government dare not attack it openly. And yet they cannot adopt it. Why? Because they are chained and yoked to a system which is the reverse of just and fair and equitable. Why, Sir, I will take the policy of my hon. friend the Minister of Finance as set forth by himself. He said there were three methods of raising revenue:

One is to have simple free trade, under which you have no customs imposts at all, the revenue

necessary for the country being raised by direct taxation.

We had supposed up to the time the hon. gentleman spoke that this was the English system. We supposed this upon the authority of Sir Robert Peel, Richard Cobden, Bright and Gladstone. But, my hon. friend says, all these authorities are in error, that they have not free trade in England—that they have what he calls a revenue tariff. I shall not discuss that with my hon. friend. I shall accept the opinion of the English people that they have free trade. But, whatever system they have in England, whether it is free trade or revenue tariff, my hon. friend and the Government will have none of it. And why? They give us reasons. One of their reasons is that England is going down all the time under such a system. The hon. Minister of Marine and Finance gave his reasons. I hope his opinions are not shared by all the gentlemen on the other side, but, if they agree with him, I do not wonder that they say we should not imitate the example of England. He gave his reasons in plain language. He told us that the British nation under free trade is no longer able to compete with the civilized nations of Europe, but that she is driven to spend millions upon her army and her navy in order to force her trade upon unwilling savages in the uncivilized countries of the world.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. LAURIER. Yes; here is the language used by the hon. gentleman:

Driven from the civilized markets of the world, steadily and every year finding their output to those markets decreasing, they spend millions on their navy, and millions on their army, to force their wares, and their goods, and their merchandise, into the uncivilized markets of the world.

Sir, I never yet heard the fair name of the great nation so slandered and insulted. At least I never heard the name of England so insulted by a man of English blood. The charge was not new to me; I had read it in the pages of continental pamphleteers; but I am sure we were not prepared to hear it from the mouth of a man of English blood. And such a man! A Conservative; a Tory; a member of the Imperial Federation League; a member of the Canadian Privy Council; an aspirant, perhaps, to the British Privy Council; a K.C.M.G., and a preacher of loyalty in season and out of season! And is this really the estimate of hon. gentlemen on the other side, is this really what they believe to be the commercial condition of England? Do they really believe, as stated by the hon. Minister, that England is no longer able to hold her own with the civilized nations of the earth? Do they believe that the soldiers and the sailors of England, whose banners bear the proud inscriptions of Malplaquet and Ramilles, Aboukir and Tra-