

In offering explanations respecting the Commercial policy of Canada, I shall not attempt to enter into any special details which would at once occupy too much of your time, and also divert attention from those points which appear to me more worthy of the consideration of such a meeting as this.

It may be sufficient to repeat the statement made by the Finance Minister on introducing his Tariff, that he had invited suggestions from all quarters on the subject and had fairly considered them. Time did not permit of representations being received from England, but I am quite justified in saying that the Government of Canada invite, and will give favourable consideration to any suggestions made in regard to particular industries affected injuriously by the Tariff, and if desired, I shall be happy myself to receive and forward them.

I am not insensible that in much of what I may say my ideas may run counter to the present accepted principles of Trade in this Country, but I count upon your indulgence and patience because I am performing the duty Englishmen always respect, of defending my own Country, and because if what I say be wrong, the best way to correct me is to have the reasons fairly stated and rebutted.

Let me then briefly state the necessity that existed for the increase of import duties by Canada, and afterwards the reasons for adopting the actual course pursued.

The depression in business had for the last three years seriously affected the revenue, and it was found that a deficit existed equal to one sixth of the Customs' receipts. To maintain the national credit, and provide for the public service, additional taxation was indispensable, and as under Confederation all local sources of revenue are at the disposal of the subordinate Provincial Governments, no other mode existed than an increase of Customs and Excise.

While present wants absolutely demanded increased revenue, Canada it must be remembered, has from motives of Imperial policy been now charged with the Government and administration of all the vast British possessions in North America, and the charges for this Service are daily increasing. Canada has in this respect become the Trustee of British interests, and is responsible for a variety of duties which until very recently belonged to the Imperial Government. Her frontier along the United States has been extended from Lake Superior to the Pacific Ocean, 2,500 miles. She has the charge of the numerous Indian tribes of the interior. She has all the responsibilities arising out of the hostile Indians of the United States who have sought refuge within her bounds, requiring a large and ever-increasing Mounted Police, and constant oversight and care by skilled Agents to prevent the outbreak of Indian wars. Beyond all this, Canada has the charge of opening to civilization the far outstretching fertile Prairie Lands of the North West, a district