

April 24, 1872

The matter then dropped.

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PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL INTEREST

Mr. JONES (Leeds North and Grenville North) in moving for a select committee said that he did so in the interests of agriculture in the Dominion which should receive protection as well as the manufacturing interest. In Ontario and Quebec there were in 1861, 25,225 persons engaged in manufactures against 2,139,882 engaged in agricultural pursuits, or interested therein, and he believed it to be in the interests of this class that a protective tariff should be adopted on agricultural products coming from the United States. He was surprised that the hon. member for Waterloo South (Mr. Young) did not agree with him in this. The remarks of that gentleman that products from the United States only came into this country to be transported to the European markets were contrary to the facts. Goods passing through the country en route to Europe paid no duty and he would quote from the Returns to show the extent of goods imported from the United States into Canada on which duty had been collected:—

In Ontario we had received from the United States between the 30th June, 1870, and the 1st April, 1871, when the duties were repealed:

Salt and fresh meat to the extent of 3,492,981 lbs., amounting to \$370,045.

Wheat, 526,480 bushels amounting to \$532,036.

Grain of all other kinds, 1,013,900 bushels, amounting to \$592,710.

In Quebec: Wheat, 139,478 bushels, amounting to \$137,577. Grain of all other kinds 90,196 bushels, amounting to \$6,716. Flour, of Wheat and Rye, 43,980 barrels, amounting to \$208,413.

In Nova Scotia: Wheat, 92,257 bushels.

New Brunswick: Flour of Wheat and Rye, 81,092 barrels, amounting to \$490,091.

On all these articles the total amount of duty collected in all the Provinces was \$149,021, but if we had had the same duties on products entering this country as are imposed by the United States on our agricultural products we should have collected \$745,105. He thought that our farmers should have protection as they bore a large share of the local taxation and contributed greatly towards the construction of our public works. He did not understand why we should pay duty on goods from Great Britain, which we could not manufacture ourselves, and at the same time admit free of duty goods and products of the United States, nearly all of which we manufactured or raised in the country.

Some of the advocates of Free Trade said the United States would eventually grant us Reciprocity, and in the meantime we should not assume a hostile position in matters of the tariff. He did not agree with them and quoted from the correspondence relating to the Washington Treaty in support of his views. He contended that free trade had proved a failure in England. At the moment there was free access to the British market; other nations had imposed a higher tariff than before, yet in face of this, statesmen in England had stated that the United States would see the advantage of admitting Canadian products and establishing principles of free trade.

The American members of the High Commission had come to the conclusion that the free admission of the products of the country was of greater advantage to us than our fisheries and the navigation of the St. Lawrence were to them. He was not surprised that they had come to that conclusion. The last Trade Returns of the United States that he had consulted—those for 1869—he had found that we had sent to the American market products of Canada to the extent of \$30,000,000 on \$25,000,000, of which duty equal to 20 per cent had been paid, and it was not to be wondered at that they should decline to admit our products free. He quoted from the New York Tribune which stated that the reason our people emigrated to the United States was, that they could make more by farming there than they could in Canada, owing to their protective duties, and said that it was not surprising that our young men went there in such numbers.

He contended that if we had protection it should not be confined to the manufacturing interests, it should be general (*Hear, hear*); let all be protected, but not one at the expense of the other. The people he represented held this view, and he had no doubt that at the next election they would consider it a vital question. He hoped that the House would see the importance of affording some protection to the farming interest, which was composed of a very peaceable and industrious class of the community, and that the question would not be viewed from a local and selfish point of view, but in accordance with its merits.

Mr. De COSMOS said he was not prepared to speak at length as he did not anticipate the question would have come up today. He might say, however, that the feeling of British Columbia was a unit in favour of the protection of the agricultural industry. The House and Government might think that because British Columbia had accepted the Canadian tariff she was not in favor of protection on agricultural interests, but she merely accepted that tariff because she did not think Canada would modify it to such an extent as [not] to protect the farming interests and he made this explanation in order to show the Government and the House how desirable it was to let the matter go to a committee, so that there might be full enquiry as to whether the farming products should not be protected. The farmers of British Columbia were comparatively poor and the country rugged and they could not compete with California without protection.