

ers. While a few of the latter are benefited by protection. I think the majority would state that the protection has rather been an injury to them than a benefit. The farmers do not want protection; they believe it is of no use to them; although it has been tried for a number of years. We do not find the farmers coming to this House in large numbers, flooding the lobbies and asking for increased protection. They say they have more protection than they want, and the sooner it is abolished the better it will be for them. Only a short time ago I had placed in my hands a petition from a farmers' association known as the Dominion Grange. That petition, which was presented to this House, reads as follows:—

The agriculturists of Canada are large purchasers of goods, and it is their interest to procure them at the lowest prices. That the imposition of heavy customs duties enables home manufacturers to charge high prices, which enrich themselves without adding anything to the national treasury. That this increases the price of living, while the duties upon agricultural products do not increase the values of those products to any considerable extent, as the prices of the bulk of them are controlled by prices in foreign markets.

We, therefore, ask that the tariff be reduced to the lowest basis consistent with the requirements of the revenue.

From past experience we know that the Dominion Franchise Act has been found to be both cumbersome and expensive, and liable to gross irregularities and errors.

We, therefore, respectfully ask that some other system be adopted which will ensure greater accuracy, more simplicity and less expense.

We desire to enter our most strenuous protest against subsidizing a line of steamships to Australia. As the products of that country are similar to the agricultural products of Canada, but are produced at a very much less cost, this would be a blow at our home market, and taxing ourselves to destroy our interests.

The Patrons of Industry, another farmers' organization, have also spoken on this subject. They insist on tariff for revenue only, so adjusted as to fall upon luxuries and not upon the necessaries of life, and they say they are in favour of reciprocal trade on fair and equal terms between Canada and the world. I am glad, Sir, to know that the deliverances of these important bodies of farmers agree exactly with the platform of the Liberal party. An attempt has been made to show that the Liberal party are in favour of free trade as it is in England. We deny that. Two years ago a convention was held in the city of Ottawa, attended by Liberals from every part of the Dominion—not only members of Parliament and ex-members, but by other representatives from the people. That convention did not decide for a tariff as it is in England; but the trade platform laid down was this:

That the tariff should be reduced to the needs of honest, economical and efficient government;

That it should be so adjusted as to make free, or to bear as lightly as possible upon, the neces-

Mr. SEMPLE.

saries of life, and should be so arranged as to promote freer trade with the whole world, more particularly with Great Britain and the United States.

It is evident, Sir, that we cannot have free trade as it is in England. Our conditions are quite different. We have borrowed large sums of money in England, and, as the wise man has said, "the borrower is servant to the lender." We have borrowed abroad \$207,000,000, on which we have to pay interest every year; so that we occupy a very different position to that occupied by the people of Great Britain. The hon. Finance Minister, in his Budget speech made a comparison between the present Government and that of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie—the one representing a protective policy, and the other tariff for revenue only, as far as possible. The more the comparison is made, and the more it is studied, the better it will be for the Liberal party of the Dominion. What a change altered circumstances make. For years, in every session of Parliament, at all political meetings, it was stated that the hon. member for South Oxford was a failure as a Finance Minister, that it was because of his incapacity that deficits existed. But the present Finance Minister, by the position he now takes, and the statements he makes,—and his followers endorse all he does and says—virtually takes it all back. He virtually admits that he has been mistaken. Deficits, he now says, are caused by not enough of taxes being levied. His followers applaud their level-headed Finance Minister, as they are bound to do, no matter how much the position he takes in his Budget speech contradicts all they have said in the past concerning the management of the finances of the country by the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright). I shall present figures to show the great difference in the expenditure of the present Government compared with that of the Mackenzie Government. Take the records of the Mackenzie Government and taxation levied during their term of office:—

1874-75	\$ 20,664,817
1875-76	18,614,415
1876-77	17,697,924
1877-78	17,841,938
1878-79	18,476,613

Total\$ 93,295,768

Compare that expenditure with the expenditure of the last five years:

1889-90	\$ 31,587,071
1890-91	30,314,151
1891-92	28,446,157
1892-93	29,321,367
1893-94	27,579,203

Total\$147,247,949

Or an average of \$29,449,589 against an average of \$18,659,153 in Mr. Mackenzie's