

It can do a vast amount of good to the farmer. And, if properly applied in such a country as this, it can help all classes, and do it with an even hand. No one will be hurt if this country adopts a uniform high tariff sufficient to make every line of industry prosperous. In this it would but be doing its first duty to the citizens over whom it presumes to rule. The very first duty of a government is to see to it that the citizen of the country is enabled to earn his living, and to earn it in the best possible way and under the most easy circumstances compatible with doing an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. This government has not done that. This government permits goods to come in from foreign countries and overflood our markets. It is true they have brought down this anti-dumping clause, a clause that has done little or no good, inasmuch that producers in the old country have petitioned that it should be removed at an early date. Why, under this anti-dumping clause, the exporter must make a four-fold or five-fold declaration. It is so intricate that the declaration necessary to be made covers a paper about six inches long, even in fine type. There are five classes of declarations; and in order that you may come within the limits of that law, it is better to make them all. The government dodge about in every possible way and avoid the main issue of affording what the mechanics, the manufacturers and the farmers of this country need—adequate protection for our various industries.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I feel that I have already spoken too long; but I wish to say a few words on the subject of the preferential tariff. But I do not intend to tread minutely over the ground over which the Finance Minister simply jumped this afternoon. If I remember his speech of last year, he gave the British people to understand that unless in the near future they reciprocated on this preferential business, it might be necessary to rescind his preferential tariff. I do not know what his views are on that subject to-day. The hon. gentleman did not vouchsafe to us any information on the subject of the preferential tariff. But it is an important matter in the interests of this country and of the empire; and it seems to me that our Minister of Finance, even if we have reached the dog-days and the dying hours of the session, might have found time to give a few minutes to tell us what he is about as to the preferential tariff between Great Britain and the various colonies of the empire. Sir, this is one of the great questions that we should deal with. I may be told that I am a manufacturer, and, as such, I am opposed to preferential trade, because it might hit some industry in which I am engaged. Not at all. I believe that the manufacturers of this country are prepared to stand a fair share of the brunt with the people in order

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to assist the mother country and the colonies to trade together, and trade more abundantly than ever before—a policy extending to all parts of the earth where the British flag floats, to receive from them the goods they are ready to part with, they to receive from us the goods we desire to sell. There is a fair and square protection proposition that might be made. The Minister of Finance has had this in tow for several years, and nothing has come of it, except a number of changes. I believe the hon. minister (Mr. Fielding) has stated that he stands for stability of tariff. I believe that he has stated that that is one of the great necessities of our industry. Still the hon. gentleman has made more radical changes in less time than any other Finance Minister in the history of the country. Some hon. gentlemen may ask: Where is the proof of this? I will tell you in short order. In 1896 there was no preferential tariff. The Minister of Finance finally stumbled upon one, though he did not intend it. First he gave 12½ per cent on everything, thus changing the value of every article in the whole list, from the penny article to the thousand pound article—all having alike this preference of 12½ per cent.

That lasted a year, open to the world. Then he came down next year and changed the discount from 12½ per cent to 25 per cent, and at the same time plumed himself as standing for a steadfast tariff. Every merchant who has ever dealt in hardware knows the tricks of that trade. To change the discount is a game that the hardware man has always been accustomed to. Instead of changing the price of the whole line he changes the discount, but that changes the price of the whole line. So when the Finance Minister tells us that he represents a stable tariff, he is guilty of misrepresentation to that extent, because every time he changed that preferential duty he changed every article in the whole list; from the beginning to the end of the schedules he changes every article in price. It went first from net to 12½ per cent, from 12½ per cent to 25, and from 25 it went to 33½, all within three years, changing the value of every article that is imported into the Dominion of Canada. Still he says he stands for a steadfast tariff. A steadfast tariff is good, but no tariff should be steadfast that is not good. Is it right to go on in evil ways because you have always been in evil ways? The sooner you change the better. In the same way, if you have a tariff that is not just to the industries of this country, that is not protecting the workmen and the artisans, that is not retaining Canada for the Canadians, the sooner you change that tariff the better for this country, and the better in the long run will it be for the gov-