

He now requested the Government to consider the interest of the agricultural class, and he would urge upon the Government the necessity of adopting a true National Policy. The result of the abolition of this excise duty would be that next year Canadian farmers would largely cultivate this article, and bring the product to market for sale; and the farmer who would have a bad tobacco would perceive that it was necessary to change his system of cultivation, and contact with experienced farmers would be to him an inestimable advantage. If this was done, in a few years, instead of importing tobacco, we would export a very considerable quantity of it; and then the Government could levy an export duty on this article, and the revenue derived from this source would be greater than it was to-day. He observed, with pleasure, that during the present Session, on each occasion that the interests of the agricultural class came under consideration, the members of the House spoke strongly in favour of this section of the population. He particularly asked the support of all those members who were favourable to the protection of this interest, to the motion he submitted, in order to induce the Government to grant this request. He moved:—

“That Mr. Speaker do not now leave the Chair, but that it be resolved, ‘That, whereas, one million dollars worth of tobacco is imported every year, and, whereas, that plant might be cultivated to advantage in this country, this House is of the opinion that the cultivation thereof should be encouraged by the abolition of duties on tobacco grown in Canada.’”

Mr. LAURIER said, if he properly understood the motion made by the hon. gentleman, its object was to encourage the manufacture of tobacco in this country, to prohibit the importation of foreign tobacco, and to facilitate the cultivation of tobacco in this country.

Mr. BOLDUC: No; I do not wish to prohibit the importation of foreign tobacco.

Mr. LAURIER said he did not know to what point the two propositions were compatible. He could not see how the cultivation of Canadian tobacco, and the importation of foreign

tobacco, could be equally encouraged. The object of the motion was to collect a revenue from the importation of tobacco, and to relieve home-grown tobacco from duty. His hon. friend had said, in the course of his argument, that they could consider the interests of the agricultural class from the farmer's point of view; but the first question that presented itself was this: Was this country adapted to the cultivation of tobacco? He observed that his hon. friend said that if this Excise duty was abolished for a certain number of years, the production of Canadian tobacco would assume such proportions as to permit tobacco to be exported instead of being imported, as was now the case. But was this possible? Was it possible to maintain seriously, that Canada could ever produce enough of this article to enable it to be exported? It was well known that, above all in the Province of Quebec, and in the Maritime Provinces, and also in Ontario, we could not produce tobacco which could enter into successful competition with the foreign-grown article. We produced an inferior quality of tobacco, which was used for local purposes. The agricultural class was frugal and economical, and it produced tobacco for its own consumption; but, on the other hand, it was equally certain that it was perfectly impossible to raise, in Canada, tobacco which could enter into successful competition with the foreign article, for the simple reason that we had not the climatic conditions necessary to its growth. The Province of Quebec, above all, and all the Provinces east of Quebec, could not raise tobacco on a considerable scale, for the simple reason that their climatic conditions were not proper to the growth of this plant, which was excessively sensible to such conditions. Again, our seasons were too short to permit its successful cultivation; Spring was too late, and Autumn came too soon; and, under the best possible climatic conditions, the tobacco which we cultivated could never attain maturity. The farmers were obliged to take it in before it arrived at perfect maturity, and then, very frequently in Lower Canada, they were visited with frosts during the warmest months of summer, even in