

purpose of still further depreciating the value of these products. If the woollen industries are still claiming to be infant, and not able to stand on their own feet, I think it is time for us to ask whether the great farming industry of this country has not some rights as well as the woollen manufacturers. In the interest of the consuming population of this country, as well as the agricultural population, we should be content to grind up rags only produced at home and not encourage the importation of woollen rags, for the purpose of protecting a few manufacturers at the expense of the great consuming population of this country.

Mr. BOWELL. The hon. gentleman has taken the same line of argument in reference to this question as that pursued by those that preceded him, namely, that this is an inopportune time to place upon the free list an article which has absolutely been free ever since June, 1879. It may be, from the arguments of hon. gentlemen, a reason for striking it out of the free list; and after consultation with my colleagues, having discovered that hon. gentlemen opposite have turned protectionists, more particularly upon this particular question, and as it meets the approbation of the majority of those who represent farming constituencies who are supporting the Government, we have decided to strike it out. It is peculiarly gratifying to the Government, and must be to those who have supported its policy ever since it has been inaugurated, to know that we are gradually bringing into the fold hon. gentlemen opposite. Let me only hope they may continue in their conversion, and if possible that all of the other articles on the free list may be added to the protected list. Under the peculiar circumstances mentioned by the hon. member for North Wentworth (Mr. Bain), we will be only too glad, in the interest of protection itself and of the farming community, to strike this out and add to the protected list such other articles as may be necessary in their interest. That is the policy, and has been the policy of the Government ever since 1878. The Government are particularly delighted at the fact—

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. You do not look very happy.

Mr. BOWELL. The Government are always happy at the conversion to protectionist principles of their opponents, and will, in the case of every article which comes into competition, either directly or indirectly, with that which can be produced in this country, strike it out of the free list, in order that protection may be afforded to our own people.

Mr. BLAKE. The fact of the matter is, we have been able to convict the Government of being inconsistent with themselves; we have been able to prove that since 1879, by the operation of Orders in Council, they have been false to their own policy; we have been judging them in their scales, weighing them in their own balance, testing them by their own utterances, pointing out to them their own views, and have shown that they have been false to them all, from 1879 until to-day. The Administration has been touched in such a tender point, of which we have entered only the outer fringe yet, that the hon. gentleman has thought, in the interests of his clients, the woollen manufacturers, it expedient to throw a sprat to catch a whale, and is willing to give up the woollen goods in order to save the wool. All that is wanted to make this item correct and consistent with the hon. gentleman's policy; all that is wanted to make perfectly clear the principle upon which he is acting, is that we should add the words: In order to encourage the producer of Canadian wool and to secure good woollens to the Canadian consumer.

Mr. BOWELL. The hon. gentleman, like all Chancery lawyers, is very fond of splitting hairs.

Mr. BLAKE. Splitting wool.

Mr. BAIN (Wentworth.)

Mr. BOWELL. It is very difficult to get wool where there is only hair. The Government is not inconsistent with its policy; the Government has in the past, and we have been accused of it a dozen times during this debate, of changing the tariff every Session, in order to meet the peculiar circumstances in which the country is placed at the time. It having been conclusively shown during this debate by both sides, that under the peculiar circumstances of the wool trade at present, we should do nothing to interfere with the wool producer obtaining as large a price as possible; therefore it is directly in accord with the policy which the Government has always carried out since 1879—and which was exemplified last night in the reply of the leader of the Government to the leader of the Opposition—that we are practical politicians and not flies on the wheel, an expression the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) delights to use. It is strictly in accord with the policy of the Government that the moment circumstances present themselves which lead the Government to believe that it is in the interest of the community to adopt a certain line they at once adopt it.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. gentleman is not a fly on the wheel, but a straw on the current; he saw which way the current was drifting and went with it. We now learn that this paternal Government, this Government of inspection and observation, this Government which has been making the interests of the country to flourish all over for the last few years by Acts of Parliament—we now learn that this model Government did not know until this afternoon the condition of the woollen trade. We find that common members of Parliament here have been obliged to instruct the Government on what they ought to have known.

Mr. IRVINE. In making my remarks before recess, I stated that a large quantity of the wool imported into this country was said to be a wool similar to that raised in this country. I did not mean to convey the impression that that wool was smuggled into the country, but I meant to say that it was not correctly classified. If any doubt exists in the mind of any hon. gentleman, he would, after he heard the Minister give his explanation of the various classes of wool, be satisfied that it is not a very easy matter to classify the wool correctly. The hon. Minister tried to enlighten this House, by stating that Down wool was combing wool. The hon. member for North Bruce (Mr. McNeill) said that Oxford Down wool, 4 and 5 inches long, was combing wool. Allow me to say that none of the Down wool, either the Oxford, Shropshire, or South Down, are combing wools. The hon. Minister stated that the Oxford Down was 4 or 5 inches long; well, that which we call combing wool or Leicester wool, is 9, 10 or 11 inches long. If the hon. Minister of Customs is so ignorant of this, what can we expect of his officers at the port of entry. I am not particular how the matter is dealt with. All I have got to say is that we have to give up the raising of sheep at present, for wool is worth comparatively nothing. An hon. gentleman opposite said he could buy Canadian wool at 20 cents per pound; is there any man in the country who will attempt to raise wool for that figure? I think this is the fourth time which the hon. Minister of Customs has referred to a statement of mine, that there was considerable smuggling done in my country, in a way worthy or unworthy of the hon. gentleman. I am reminded in this of what Mr. Mill, in England, said at an election meeting once, when, standing before an audience of laborers, he was asked by one of them: "Sir, did not you state once that the laboring men were liars?" The hon. gentleman was not afraid to state again what he once stated, and he said: "I did, Sir." I stated that there was a vast amount of smuggling done. I never conveyed the impression that my people were worse or better than those in other parts of the Dominion in that respect. I state now that I believe there is a good deal of smuggling done, but it is done by a