

implements, such as mowing and reaping machines, &c., shall come in free. That may be right or wrong, but apart from the fact that the manufacture of these articles is a very considerable branch of industry here, it is to be noted here that in New Brunswick the duty on agricultural implements is 17½ per cent. Then the duty there on boots and shoes, brooms, chairs, &c., and articles of that kind, is 18 per cent. Ours it is proposed to reduce to 15 per cent. When another change comes to be made, will we have to go up to their standard, or will they have to come down to ours? We know that in New Brunswick they have lately been compelled to add a special duty of 3 per cent on a large class of their imports, to meet their railway debt, and the result is that on a great number of articles the tariff of New Brunswick, instead of being lower than what is proposed here, is 18 per cent. It would be useless to continue the enumeration of other articles where the tariffs of the Lower Provinces differ from ours. Enough has already been said to shew how little value is to be placed on the argument of assimilation of which we have heard so much. Let me now shew, by way of illustration, how inconsistent in its details this tariff is with any principle of political economy, and how abruptly it strikes down existing concerns. I select from the many letters that have reached my hands one from the proprietors of certain Iron Rolling Mills: and I cannot do better than quote the exact words of their remonstrance to the Minister of Finance:

"As proprietors of three of the largest rolling mills in Canada, we take the liberty of addressing you a few words on the proposed reduction of the tariff on manufactured iron.

"Under the existing tariff there is only a duty of 10 per cent, which leaves so small a margin that it is with great difficulty we are able to compete with the imported article. We have invested in machinery, &c., from \$200,000 to \$300,000—a large portion of which we have imported and paid a duty of 30 per cent therefor.

"We employ from 900 to 1000 men, and pay out weekly \$5,000 to \$6,000 for wages. They are not like common labourers; are fitted only for that particular labour, which must cease entirely in Canada. It has taken us years to get these men together, as the peculiar nature of the work requires skill and experience.

"We require to keep a stock of raw material consisting of pig iron, puddled iron, iron ore, scrap, coal, &c., of from \$200,000 to \$300,000, and turn out annually 15,000 to 16,000 tons of manufactured iron, consisting of sheets, bars, nail and spike rods, valued at \$50 to \$60 per ton.

"If the proposed reduction is carried into effect we will have to shut down our works, as it would be impossible to compete with the manufactured iron coming in free. The result will be

about 1000 men, with their families, will leave immediately for the United States, where their labour is in great request."

Thus you see, Sir, that in this case the remission of 19 per cent duty has the very opposite effect from that which it was intended. It lets the article manufactured here in free, instead of the raw material of the manufacturers. [Hear, hear.]

I shall now allude to another interest, in connection with the proposed increase on excise, which, if carried into effect, will, it is said, place the Canadian distiller at a great disadvantage. (Hear, hear.) I speak from information given me by men largely engaged in the trade. And it is a fact I am aware of, from my own personal knowledge, that there is now but one distillery in Lower Canada, the Molsons having been compelled to shut up in consequence of their inability to compete against the illicit manufacture fostered by high excise duties, and the imperfect collection of these duties. What I have to say on this point I offer in the most friendly spirit. People will drink whisky, and it is just as well that it should be manufactured in the country out of our own coarse grains, which do not find the same ready market in the United States since the Reciprocity Treaty was abolished. We know that when excise duties are high, there is great temptation to fraud among distillers. We have had practical evidence of that. I well understand the position of the Minister of Finance, that he does not like to come down to ask, year after year, an increase in the estimates for the cost of collecting excise; because there is always, not unnaturally, a clamour against him when he makes such a proposition; and he has been put to a variety of shifts in devising some system dependent on the returns of the distillers themselves. But all these complicated returns—all the forms to be filled up—all the affidavits he requires from distillers—depend upon it, are of no use whatever. Many representations have been made to myself that the honest distiller would be compelled to go out of business, unless a more efficient check were placed on the dishonest ones. There were two large distilleries in Montreal, but, as I have said, the Molsons have been compelled to shut up; another firm, who were paying as much as \$50,000 a month of excise to the revenue, is also now preparing to close—and for this reason, that they saw spirits brought to market and sold under their own eyes at prices less than they could possibly be produced from the raw material. (Hear, hear.) The people who distilled these spirits, I presume, made their affidavits and returns regularly; but, of course, extraordinary frauds must have been committed. One well-known character was known to boast that he was making a clear profit of \$5000 a week by cheating the rev-