

European states. The consequence was, that there was an increase in the demand for farm products in those foreign countries, and we had the good fortune to sell them the surplus of our abundance. Our farmers made a great deal of money; those of them who were indebted paid their debts, and a considerable number of them remained with money in hand to loan. This is one of the reasons for the diminution in the rate of interest which took place then, and which was alluded to by the hon. member for Ottawa. It was said by the promoters of the National Policy that it would secure the home market for our farmers. I hold that the home market was secured to our farmers before the National Policy was in existence. It is secured to our farmers by the large surpluses of farm produce which we are bound to export every year to foreign markets, in order to make it profitable to us. When our home market is overcrowded with our natural products, it ought to be obvious to everyone that it cannot be advantageous for the sale of similar products imported from foreign countries. But there is one protection that this Government could, perhaps, give to our farmers—the opening up of new markets by commercial treaties with foreign nations. Depend upon it, this is the best and the only efficient protection that could be given to the farmers of Canada. While I am on this subject I am just reminded that some gentleman in the course of this debate referred to the possibility of negotiating a commercial treaty with the United States. It has been always considered or admitted by all parties in Canada that the treaty of 1854 was beneficial to both countries, and we know that the Canadian Government could never succeed in negotiating a treaty with the United States so long as the Republican party was in power. But that party have just been driven from power and been replaced by a Democratic Administration. It is permitted to hope that, with a Democratic Administration at Washington, the Canadian Government, whether it be composed of Conservatives or Liberals, might be more successful in the negotiation of such a treaty; for it is well known that it is in the traditions of the Democratic party in the United States to extend, as much as possible, their commerce, and to restrain the restrictions upon their foreign trade as much as is compatible with the necessities of the revenue. We must not forget that the treaty of 1854 was negotiated on the part of the United States by a Democratic Administration—the Administration of General Pierce—and that the same treaty was denounced by the Republican party as soon as they assumed the reins of power. My hon. friend from Ottawa, who spoke on several subjects in his able speech, to some of which I have already alluded and to some of which I shall have to allude briefly, forgot to say anything of the results of the National Policy regarding emigration. We remember that, according to the promoters of the National Policy, one of its results would be not only to check the emigration of our countrymen to the United States, but even to bring back to our country those of them who had previously emigrated. I am sure that it would be interesting for every member of this House to see in this respect the statistics of the hon. the Minister of Agriculture, and to compare the number of those who have returned with the number of those who have gone to the United States since the National Policy was inaugurated. Those who returned are farmers who, after having rented their farms, go to the United States for a few years to earn money. Those generally return to our country; but those who are not land owners as a general rule do not return, but stay on the other side of the line, and if some of them, from time to time, make their appearance in Canada, it is not for a long time. I represent a constituency which is essentially agricultural. It has no large city where is generally to be found a floating population that is disposed to emigrate. Yet I find, referring to the late census, that within the last decade the

Mr. BECHARD.

population of my constituency has diminished, and that reduction has taken place notwithstanding the permanent fact of reproduction; and in this respect, Mr. Speaker, I hold that we are as well endowed as any other people. But, notwithstanding our natural advantages, I find the population of my district has decreased by about 1,000 souls. This is a deplorable state of things, and I am sure that everybody in the country and in this House is sorry for it. It is possible that the flood of emigration has not been so large from other counties as it is from mine; but, Sir, it is well known that all over the Province people are constantly leaving and going to the United States. We were told that the National Policy would check that emigration, but to-day we are compelled to say that it has failed to fulfil the promises and expectations of those who inaugurated it. The hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Tassé), in describing the state of the country under the Administration of my hon. friend from East York (Mr. Mackenzie), has referred to the deficits which occurred for a few years and blamed him for not having resorted to what he termed a vigorous policy. But I think the hon. member would have been more fair towards my hon. friend from East York if he had stated that these deficits were not occasioned by an extravagant expenditure, but that they were caused by a diminution of the revenue. The public accounts show that the revenue which amounted in 1874-5 to \$24,648,715, had fallen in 1876-7 to \$22,059,274—a decrease of \$2,589,441 which would have been more than sufficient to cover the deficit of each year. Now, Sir, it would have been very easy for my hon. friend from East York to resort to that vigorous policy referred to by the member for Ottawa, and which we know meant nothing else but an increase of taxation; but he thought it would be more humane on his part, in the difficult circumstances in which the country was placed, to allow a few deficits to accumulate, knowing well that they would disappear, and be followed by surpluses as soon as a revival of business took place, than to increase the burden of taxation which would weigh more heavily upon the shoulders of a suffering people. But this patriotic conduct of my hon. friend was not appreciated as it ought to have been. His opponents began a terrible campaign against him. They charged him with being responsible for the depression that then prevailed in the country. It was in vain that he and his friends answered that the depression was beyond the control of the Government, and that as a commercial crisis was prevailing in other countries with which we had extensive commercial relations, it was only natural that the same crisis should be felt here. But this reasoning was of no avail; it served the purpose of hon. gentlemen opposite to hold him responsible. If bankruptcies occurred, if trade was in a state of stagnation, if manufactures were closed, if farmers suffered a succession of bad crops, or had to sell at low prices, all these evils were attributed to the Administration of my hon. friend. Sir, unfortunately, the people were convinced by the hon. gentlemen opposite, and in the fall of 1878 my hon. friend left power. He came down from the exalted position to which he, a self-made man, not having had the advantage of a classical education, had attained solely by his great talents, his industry and his indomitable energy. He fell from the proud position which he occupied, but he fell like an honest man and a man of honor, preserving his principles and an unstained reputation. My hon. friend from Ottawa referred, Sir, to the fact that some distinguished members of the Liberal party had committed themselves in years past, either by speeches or by writing, to the policy of protection; and he seemed to find fault with the Liberal party in Quebec for not having adopted the same policy. I am quite sure, Sir, that the hon. gentlemen to whom he referred are well able