

from Great Britain and have thereby injured our own manufactures.

An hon. MEMBER. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Hear, hear, says my hon. friend opposite. But at other times the argument is that the preferential tariff has made no difference in the trade with Great Britain, but that trade has increased generally and that the imports from Great Britain have only kept pace with the general increase of business throughout the world; and when we have contended, as we have, that the preferential tariff has been an instrument in increasing the imports from Great Britain, we have met the reply that it has not had that effect at all, but that the increased trade with Great Britain has come about by means altogether irrespective of the preferential tariff.

Mr. CLANCY. Will the hon. gentleman give the increase of imports from the United States during the same period?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. No, Mr. Speaker, but if it will help my hon. friend very much, I will make an admission at once. We import from the United States a large quantity of the things we require, not to please the United States, but to please ourselves. We import the raw materials from the United States, which go to make the manufacturers of Canada prosperous. If it be the policy of our hon. friends opposite to keep out the raw materials which our manufacturers require, that is not the policy of the present government.

In this connection perhaps I may be permitted to say a word as to a contention which has been advanced at times, and which has found a suggestion this session in the form of several questions by our hon. friends opposite. The argument has been used sometimes in the public press, and sometimes on the floor of this House, that our preferential tariff is admitting a large quantity of foreign goods—goods which are not British at all. Now, that is a fair matter for investigation. It was no part of our intention to extend the benefits of the preferential tariff to these foreign nations. The intention was that goods coming from Great Britain and purporting to be British goods should be bona fide products of Great Britain. But, of course, we have to remember

that Great Britain imports great quantities of raw materials and articles in the first process of manufacture, and improves or finishes them; and then she is the great shipping mart for those goods throughout the wide world; and it has been suggested by a question put by one of our hon. friends opposite that perhaps we ought to provide that the preferential tariff shall apply only to British goods, meaning materials which are grown or produced in Great Britain and undergo all the processes of manufacture in Great Britain. I had to reply that such a policy would amount to a practical repeal of the preferential tariff, because Great Britain has to import large quantities of materials out of which she produces her manufactured goods. But it has been represented that the preferential tariff is evaded, and that goods of Belgian or German or other foreign origin are brought in under it. I want to say that if any information can be furnished by any hon. gentleman in the House or by any gentleman outside, it will help us to investigate that matter; for we have every desire to see that the intentions of the preferential tariff in that respect are carried out in good faith. As to whether our present regulation for distinguishing between British and foreign goods is sufficient may also be a fair matter of inquiry. We think we have probably reached a sound conclusion in that respect when we have determined that 25 per cent of the value of an article being of British labour or industry shall give it the stamp of a British manufacture and entitle it to the benefits of the preferential tariff. But while we think we have probably reached a sound conclusion in that regard, I quite admit that it is a matter for investigation and inquiry; and if any information can be furnished which will lead us to believe that the intention of the government with respect to the preferential tariff is being evaded, either through fraud on the part of importers or through error in our own calculation as to the proper proportion of British labour, we shall deem it to be our duty to give the matter every consideration.

EXPORTS OF THE PRODUCE OF CANADA.

I have a statement here, again taking a period of four years for convenience, show-