

Canada; but as was well known, the cultivation of this cereal was impeded by the advent and ravages of the weevil, which had now disappeared, and, at the present time, the farmers of Lower Canada were sowing a large quantity of wheat. The return was considerable, and the farmers of Quebec were not far from the day when they would be no longer obliged to import the wheat and flour which they required for the support of their families. It seemed to him, as the hon. member for Charlevoix had remarked, that the farmers of Lower Canada were in need of this protection. He did not look at this question as affecting a luxury which could be well dispensed with, but considered it in respect to the revenue the farmer derived from the cultivation of the plant. The hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue had told them it was necessary to impose this tax to carry on the Government of the country. He understood perfectly well that it was requisite to impose certain taxes on luxuries, etc., but he did not regard the cultivation of tobacco as coming within the category of luxuries, but as an industrial pursuit, which concerned largely the agricultural interests. And this was a matter of the highest necessity to the farmers, owing to the profit that it gave them. In the report, which had been placed in the hands of hon. members, it would be seen that 9,000,000 odd lbs. of tobacco were imported in leaf; and, if the farmers were protected with regard to the cultivation of tobacco, they could take away the necessity which now existed as to the importation of this article, and thus largely benefit this country; since, nearly ten millions of pounds were imported. They could thus meet this want. Farmers were permitted, in all parts of the Province, to raise tobacco for their own use, to some extent, but there were districts where they did not cultivate tobacco, and, consequently, the protection now requested would largely benefit Canadian farmers. Why should we permit the entry of the American leaf and other foreign tobaccos into this country? The hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue said that we could not raise a superior quality of tobacco, and even if it matured in this country it

was always of an inferior quality. He differed in opinion with the hon. gentleman, to whom he would observe that he (Mr. Laurier) had not studied the matter, and was not aware of the facts. Probably the hon. gentleman was not a smoker, and did not know how to distinguish the quality of tobacco. He (Mr. Baby) could say that the tobacco raised in this country was of good quality. He had a perfect knowledge of the matter; and the hon. member for Montcalm could state that a considerable quantity of tobacco of very good quality was raised in the county of Joliette and in the surrounding counties, and sold at as high a price on the Montreal market as the foreign article. He did not mean to say, of course, that there were no better tobaccos imported from foreign countries than the Canadian article. There were, for instance, the highly-flavoured cigars smoked by the hon. Minister of Justice, who knew so well how to sooth thereby the anxieties of life, a tobacco which could not be had in this country certainly. But, nevertheless, tobacco of good and excellent quality was formerly raised in the Province of Quebec; and why was this not still the case? If the Government had at heart the interest of the agricultural class, which was in English called "the bone and sinew of the country," it would undoubtedly grant the request of the hon. member for Beauce. A light tax might, meanwhile be levied on home-grown tobacco, but, with the present duty, the cultivation of tobacco in Canada was rendered impossible; above all, under existing circumstances. He was consequently in favour of the motion of the hon. member for Beauce.

MR. LAFLAMME said he was surprised to hear the hon. member for Charlevoix express the opinions to which he had given utterance to-night, in relation to the motion of the hon. member for Beauce. The hon. member seemed to have forgotten that it was he and his friends who first imposed this tax. In 1868, the proposition was made by the Government, of which he was a member, to impose a tax of 17c. per lb. on Canadian manufactured tobacco, and 15c. per lb. on foreign tobacco. The proposition was