

that even though our interests have been sacrificed in the matter still the sacrifice to the country at large is not as great as would have been a war, but I cannot help feeling, too, that seventy or eighty years ago England would have taken a totally different line. When those three vessels were seized in 1886, at distances from seventy to one hundred and fifty miles from the shore, there would have been very serious difficulty in a short time, and the United States would have surrendered those vessels with a very little hesitation. Numbers of hon. gentlemen are old enough to remember the case of Slidell and Mason, and if the same attitude had been assumed by the Imperial Government in connection with those Canadian fishing crews that was assumed with respect to Slidell and Mason we should have had none of those troubles at all and our fishermen would have been allowed to conduct their lawful occupation during all those years.

I do not propose to say very much on the remaining portion of the Speech. The next paragraph is that which deals with the tariff. It is well to know that amendments are to be offered for our consideration and that they are designed to simplify the operation of the tariff. The hon. gentleman who leads the House should, from his long official experience, know that the tariff will bear simplification, and I have no doubt but that in his capacity of Minister of Trade and Commerce he has given very valuable advice in that direction. This paragraph is rather enigmatical. It does not say that all the changes which are proposed to be made are to be in the direction of diminution, although it seems to imply that. It says they are to "lessen so far as can be done consistently with those principles and with the requirements of the treasury the imposts which are now in force." I hesitate after listening to the very elaborate speeches of the hon. gentleman from Ottawa and the hon. leader of the Government about saying anything with respect to this question. I may make one observation, however, as to the conduct of the Ministry with respect to these proposed changes. A committee of the Ministry went around the country during the past year making inquiries on the spot in various places as to the operation in those places of the existing tariff; and I think that on the whole that was probably a rather judicious course of action. It is not a usual

course, but still I think there was a good deal to be said in favour of it. They came, for instance, to Halifax, and heard there the representatives of the importers and the representatives of the manufacturers and of other classes. They went round the country and gave fair and reasonable hearings to the representatives of the various classes, the representatives of the consumers as well as those of the manufacturers; but I have noticed that since that time there have been numbers of hearings given here, at Ottawa, to the representatives of the manufacturers. They appear to have been allowed, in every case, to have the last word with the Ministry, and every one knows that the last word is often a very valuable and important word. As one of the consumers, I regret it.

Hon. Mr. SMITH—If the Ministry were very forgetful it might be, but that is not likely.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I think that the speech of the hon. leader of the House this afternoon did not indicate forgetfulness at any rate. I think he remembered a good many things that he might just as well have forgotten. With respect to this tariff question, I feel tempted to say something, but probably the less said the better; but I cannot help making this observation. The government told us that protection was a capital thing—that it had no drawbacks—that it made things cheaper than they were before—and did not hurt anybody; but still, in spite of that, some little time ago, they reduced the duty on sugar very considerably, and then their newspapers and speakers all over the country asked the people to fall down and worship the government because they had taken off three millions of dollars taxation. They told us before that things were not made dearer by a tariff and that there was no taxation in reality. They asked credit for putting on the duties, and then when they took off the duties, they asked credit for taking them off. There was a duty on coal oil, and that was reduced. They took credit for having done so much in the way of reducing the burden on the consumers.

Hon. Mr. BOWELL—We did not put on that tax. Your friends put it on.

Hon. Mr. POWER—As I understand, our friends diminished the duty. It was a