

to the condition it is now in. It is that policy which has shut it out of its natural market. It is that policy which has piled on the shoulders of the people these inordinate burdens. It is that policy which has run up our debt from \$75,000,000 to \$234,000,000, and has increased our expenditure from \$13,000,000 to \$37,000,000. It is that policy which has increased the customs taxation from \$9,000,000 to \$24,000,000. It is that policy which has increased our debt, taxation, and expenditure from three to five times as fast as the population has increased. It is that policy which has a bearing upon the question whether this country shall be peopled by millions or become almost depopulated. It is that policy which has a bearing on the question whether we will be able to retain the immigrants brought by means of the appropriations the Government call on us to make, or whether they will only arrive here to drift away by the million as they have done hitherto, and help to swell the greatness and the resources of another nation. It was perfectly proper to allude to these matters in connection with the discussion of the item we have under consideration to-night.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. If the hon. gentleman wishes to appeal against the ruling of the Chair, he has a right to do so, but he has no right to reflect upon it.

Mr. CHARLTON. I deny that I have, either directly or indirectly, reflected upon your ruling, Sir, unless you consider yourself responsible for this policy. I have been talking about the general policy of the country, about the particular question of the prosperity of the country, and the means to secure it, in order to ascertain whether we will be able to people this country or not.

Mr. FOSTER. Tell us about the Buffalo interview.

Mr. CHARLTON. If the hon. gentleman will get the item and read it, I will tell him. I challenge him to produce that item and read it so that we may have it in discussion now.

Mr. FOSTER. Pull it out of your vest pocket.

Mr. CHARLTON. I challenge the Minister to read it.

Mr. BOWELL. Can you not repeat it?

Mr. CHARLTON. I read it once and my memory is not as good as that. I disclaim anything more than a serious desire to have that matter placed before the House. As reference has been made to it by the Minister of Finance, let him produce the article and read it.

Mr. FOSTER. You want to get it in the *Hansard*.

Mr. CHARLTON. None but a coward would make allusion to a thing and refuse to give a gentleman upon whom imputation has been cast the chance to refute it by withholding the charge to which he alluded.

If the Government desire to promote the population and prosperity of this country, let them retire the monopolists from power, and let them give attention to the interests of the farmer and the labourer. The results of their policy with regard to the natural markets of this country are very strikingly set forth by a comparison of the Trade and Navigation Returns with the United States for a period of years. In 1866 our exports to that country were \$40,000,000 in round numbers.

In 1891 they were \$41,000,000. Now, Sir, taking into account the short returns of nearly \$3,000,000 in round numbers last year, our exports last year were less than in 1866.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. I must ask the hon. gentleman to confine himself to the item.

Mr. LAURIER. Are we to understand that upon a question of this kind, when the Government are asking an appropriation for immigration, the House is not at liberty to discuss all questions which have a bearing upon this policy? It seems to me this ruling is not in accord with the rules of the House, as I understand them. At the opening of the committee to-day the hon. member for South Oxford required, what is always given in England and seldom in this country, from the Minister in charge of these estimates, a general statement of the policy of the country. This is always done in England. No Minister there would dream of asking the House to vote an appropriation such as this unless he gave definitely the reasons for urging the expenditure. The hon. member for South Oxford invited such an *exposé* from the Government. The Minister of Agriculture gave it, and now the whole subject is in order, and it seems to me the ruling of the Chair would confine us within unreasonable limits. We are discussing the policy of the Government with regard to immigration, and anything bearing on that subject is in order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. I understand it would be quite in order to discuss the immigration policy of the Government, but not the commercial policy.

Mr. EDGAR. Surely, in discussing a large item, the money to be spent in bringing immigrants to this country, we ought to be able to show reason why we think it is wasteful to expend money in that direction when the field is open in other directions. If we undertake to show that by a prudent course in other directions this money will be saved, which under this proposal will be wasted, we ought to be allowed to do so. Discussions in committee will be utterly useless if we are to be gagged by the Chair in discussing the general policy of the Government on an item like this.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. There is no desire on this side, and I am sure none on the part of the Chair, to gag any hon. member. The hon. member for North Norfolk has a wide scope in dealing with the question of immigration, which, every one must admit, opens up a discussion to a great extent of the policy of the Government, but the difference between the two sides of the House as to the scope allowed the hon. member is this: His contention is, that because we have asked a vote for immigration, he can open up every question concerning the human race. So far the hon. gentleman has been good enough to confine his observations to the history of Canada, including questions past and present, and every phase of the policy of the Government, but the same logic that sustains him in doing that would sustain him in coming to the history of any other country and discussing the policy of every country in the globe. We do not want to restrict the hon. gentleman unduly, we do not object to his discussing anything bearing on the question of immigration, but let his discussion be governed by some rule which will enable us, some day or other, to arrive at an end.