

make him better understood. From 1867 till 1873, Canada had a tariff averaging 15 per cent. Well, it was perfectly true that, under its operation, our industries had had to suffer much less from American competition than under the increased tariff of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. average afterwards given by the Mackenzie Government, because in the former case Canadian industries were indirectly protected by the high prices of raw materials, and the high salaries of the workmen paid by the American manufacturers, while in the latter case the great reduction of the prices of raw materials and the salaries of workmen in the United States had the effect of doing more than neutralise the last increase of our tariff to the extent of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This was an illustration of the proposition which he adhered to, that in such matters all was relative, nothing absolute. The hon. gentlemen of the Opposition were always ready with instances in relation to England in favour of their theory. It was all very well for them to look at England and point out how powerful a manufacturing country she was to-day; but they neglected to say that for centuries England had been the most Protectionist country that ever existed. In order to prove that he was right in saying so, he would quote from words written by Adam Smith, not a suspicious authority, more than a century ago, showing the high protecting tariff that existed in England at that time. Here were the words:

"The variety of goods of which the importation into Great Britain is prohibited, either absolutely or under certain circumstances, greatly exceeds what can easily be suspected by those who are not well acquainted with the laws of the Customs."

That showed well enough how Protectionist England had been for so long. If, afterwards, she became in a position to derive benefits from Free-trade, it was because Protection had paved for her the way to it. He was not more opposed to Free-trade than to Protection in the abstract, but he wanted Protection first so as to arrive at Free-trade in advantageous condition. However, it was not likely that absolute Free-trade would ever prevail amongst civilised nations, and for two reasons: first, the time

seemed passed forever when manufacturing industries were monopolised by a few capitalists. Almost every nation wished now to have manufactures of one kind or the other within the limits of its own territory, and the necessity of protecting new industries against competing old and more strongly established ones was sure to prevent general Free-trade from prevailing. Besides, the development of progress, as well as public security, necessitated more or less heavy expenses everywhere, and, in order to meet them, taxation was required. And between the different modes of taxation devised till now, none seemed more acceptable to the mass of the people than the Customs duties. If these taxes were wisely fixed, they bore the least upon the man who happened to be in adverse circumstances; for a tariff cleverly arranged would not impose duties upon prime necessities of life which were not, or could not be, easily and sufficiently produced in the country intended to be protected. That system had this advantage, that it allowed a person to pay his part of contribution to the public revenue when it was the most convenient for him to do so, and in the measure of his means. It was the tax on revenue, so eagerly looked after by many writers on political economy, but an indirect one, which operated in the most equitable manner, without hindering, as the direct tax did, enterprise and production. It realised, as much as seemed possible, the law of equalisation of the indispensable burdens imposed by the Government upon the citizens, for their mutual security and benefit. Very likely, most of the nations would retain it in force to a greater or less extent, thus preventing absolute Free-trade between each other. Hon. members of the left had spoken of Protection as being opposed to the progress of humanity, because they pretended that it increased the difficulties of relations between the different nations, and thus prevented them from knowing and liking each other better. It might appear so when only one side of the question was considered; but, in reality, it was the contrary that was true. In fact, supposing England was the only great industrial country in the world, Englishmen would be known everywhere, as they were; but other