

no word of any such thing being in view. My information within the past few months has been to the contrary effect, though I acknowledge that I have not had anything lately, but I believe that the number of refineries now at work in the Dominion render it impossible for them to make any combination, and the Government can trust, in this as in other matters, to the home competition making the price a moderate one.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). It is an immoderate one now. It is very easy for the hon. gentleman to compare the New York quotations with the Canadian.

Mr. STAIRS. I do not acknowledge that the prices of sugars to-day are immoderate. Before this change was proposed there was not any protection on sugars below No. 14, the same duty was collected on refined sugars below 14 that was collected on raw sugars below 14, and, if you look at the prices of West Indian yellows, you will find the duty per lb. was a little higher on the raw than on the refined sugars. Therefore, I contend that the Government are justified in carrying out their policy and giving the refiners sufficient protection, because the increased duty put upon these sugars is not very great; it is 5 per cent on a very low cost indeed, not more than 10 cents at the present cost and 25 per cent. The member for Brant acknowledged that he did not object to the manufacturers having sufficient protection. I say the refiners have not as great a protection as the cotton manufacturers had before 1878, under the 17½ per cent tariff. The hon. members talk about duties on granulated sugars, but they do not allow for the duty which is imposed upon raw sugar. The measure of protection is only the difference of these duties, allowing for the loss in manufacture. The hon. member for Digby (Mr. Vail) spoke of the sugar refining having injured the trade with the West Indies. If he will turn to the returns up to 1878, he will find that the contrary is the case. I am not going into the question now, because I do not want to take up the time of the committee, but the sugar refining in the Dominion has largely increased the trade with the West Indies instead of reducing it. As to the polariscopic test, though my own opinions are strongly in favor of it, I would point out that it will not help to keep beet-root sugar out. On the contrary, I think it will allow it to come in on more favorable terms than the West Indian sugar.

Mr. VAIL. I do not want to keep it out. I only think it should pay a duty according to the strength, the same as other sugars. It should not come in competition with the brighter and cleaner sugar that comes from the West Indies of a lower grade, without paying the same duty.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. The only result of this measure will be to add to the price of sugar to the consumer, because it is quite clear that the refiner will take every farthing out of the consumer that he can. The only check upon him was the power of importing these sugars when they were at their present low figures, which could be done under the existing Tariff, but will not be done under the Tariff now proposed. This will amount on the average, taking the valuations given us in the Customs return, to 68 per cent., and that on an article which can hardly be called a luxury, which is, if not a prime necessary, at any rate one of the necessities of life for all parties in the Dominion, is a most enormous duty, and, comparing the prices paid here with the prices paid in the United States, under a heavier scale of duty, our refiners are levying an enormous scale of duties on the people of this country. I should like to hear from the Minister of Customs what he has to say as to the difference of duties on cargoes imported in Montreal and in Halifax, which has been alluded to by my hon. friend. Waiving entirely the question of protection, it is perfectly clear that pains ought to be taken to

make the duty the same in the different ports of the Dominion, and, if my hon. friend's facts are correct, it is quite clear that a serious injustice is worked upon the people of Halifax and the refiners there.

Mr. BOWELL. I propose, for a few minutes, to refer to the charge of the hon. member for Digby. It is not a new one on his part. As I anticipated, he has come ready primed in order to renew the attack which he made some time ago, and I think, upon a full investigation of the matter, if he had had all the facts before him, he would probably not have made the serious charge he has, particularly of neglect of duty on the part of the head of the Customs Department in reference to investigation into these matters. That there may have been differences in grading and errors committed in different ports I am not prepared to deny. Any gentleman who has had any experience in administering the Customs law with the numerous ports there are in this Dominion, and consequently the very large number of appraisers and collectors, who take different views upon different subjects, would know that it would be almost impossible even to suppose that you could secure perfect uniformity in all these ports. The question to which the hon. gentleman referred, the importation of these two cargoes of sugar into Halifax and their afterwards having been sent to Montreal and entered at a lower rate, is not strictly in accordance with the facts. I do not say that the hon. gentleman has made that statement knowingly; but I do say this, particularly in reference to the importation of sugars, that when the complaint was received from Halifax I sent an officer at once to make a thorough investigation, not only as to that entry, but to the value of the sugar at Jamaica at the time of exportation and the rates which should be properly charged upon such sugar. The reports made to me were that the demands made of the importer by the appraiser at Montreal, were higher than the market value of the sugar at the time it was exported from Jamaica, and it was the duty of the Department, under such circumstances, to refund whatever extra amount might have been collected. But I can assure the committee that not a dollar has ever been remitted to any importer upon any article, until there has been a full and thorough investigation into the whole question. When those who are experts make an investigation and report, it is not expected that the Department, unless there is something so flagrant that it is easily discovered, would interfere with that report. The charge also made by the Halifax merchants and importers, that Montreal has an advantage over Halifax, was thoroughly investigated, and the results shows that Halifax, on the contrary, in the way to which the hon. gentleman referred, and also in the grading of the sugars, has, if anything, an advantage over Montreal. When the hon. gentleman brought this question before the House upon a previous occasion, as I was desirous of obtaining the fullest information, I wrote to Mr. Dustan, who had visited Ottawa a short time before, and who had made the same serious complaints, not only against the Department, but against the appraisers and collectors in Montreal. He was invited to investigate all the returns that we had, and all the reports made by those who had investigated the question, and the collector in Montreal was written to, asking him to give Mr. Dustan access to all the books and entries, and give him all the information he might require to enable him to satisfy himself as to the manner in which the business was transacted at that port. My letter was dated on the 19th of February, immediately after the debate in this House, and I will read it:

"MY DEAR DUSTAN,—In conversation with the Commissioner a few days since, on the question of sugars imported at Montreal and Halifax, I was informed that you made a thorough investigation in Montreal some time ago, and that you expressed yourself satisfied as to the correctness of the Montreal values for duty.

"Kindly let me know how you found things at that port.

"Yours truly,

"(Signed), M. BOWELL."