

THE HERALD

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 1897. PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY. SUBSCRIPTION—\$1.00 A YEAR. JAMES MCISAAC, Editor & Proprietor.

Amending the Amended.

By reference to the account of the proceedings in the Dominion Parliament during last week, it will be seen that the Finance Minister has with the best grace possible, been performing the act of swallowing himself. When Mr. Fielding introduced his tariff resolutions about six weeks ago, he and his friends proclaimed that the tariff then brought down was to remain unchanged; but the few weeks that have elapsed since have convinced the Finance Minister that he had quite a lot to learn about framing a tariff, when he made his budget speech, and that it was very reckless on his part to imagine that his resolutions, as first presented, could stand the test of criticism. The resolutions as originally presented to Parliament by Mr. Fielding contained some three hundred changes from the tariff up to that time existing. Last week he introduced about fifty amendments to the amendments first proposed by him. A number of these amendments were on the lines suggested by the Opposition. So concerned has been the reasoning of the Opposition in discussing the tariff, and so keen has been their criticism, that the Government were forced to abandon the position first assumed by them. This is especially true of the combines clause and the preferential clause. As first presented, Mr. Fielding's tariff resolution contained a clause setting forth that the Government could, at any time determine what it might be doing in the future, and consequently could destroy it. It was pointed out by the Opposition that placing such absolute power in the hands of the Government was a very dangerous proceeding, as it might be used for political purposes, and a company doing a legitimate business would be liable to be subjected to great loss to be ruined indeed, by the enforcing of this clause by the Government. The Opposition pointed out that the decision of a court or a judge should determine whether or not a combine existed. The Government have amended the clause so that a company has to be declared a combine by a Judge of a Superior Court before the law can recognize it as such. The most remarkable feature of the Fielding tariff is what the Grits were pleased to call the preferential clause. This pretended to give a preference to the imports from the importations from Great Britain. It was received with a great flourish of trumpets by the Grits, and several poems were written about it; but Sir Charles Tupper and other members of the opposition at once pointed out that this clause would not or could not have the effect of giving a preference to Great Britain's products. It was likely to have the very contrary effect. In support of this contention it was pointed out that treaties entered into between the Imperial Government and the Governments of Germany, Belgium and about twenty other countries required that none of the colonies should give to the imports from the latter country any preference in the matter of customs duties that would not be extended to the countries that were parties to these treaties. It thus appeared that what was called a preferential clause in favor of Great Britain, was not such in reality; but must of necessity extend the same preference to any other country that in the matter of duty would meet the requirements of the statute. The arguments and criticisms of the opposition on this point, also forced the Government to seek cover. They have amended the clause in this fashion: "That the governor-in-council may extend the benefits of such reciprocal tariff to any country which may be entitled thereto by virtue of any treaty with her Majesty." As a matter of fact the Government do not appear to know where they stand in this matter. Sir Charles Tupper, Mr. Foster and other members of the opposition have done their best to elicit information from Mr. Fielding and Mr. Laurier, and Mr. Patterson as to what countries the Government believe the clause applicable to; but in vain. They sat as dumb as oysters. They appear to be completely at sea regarding the matter. Another extraordinary feature the Government's conduct in this matter is arrogating to themselves the regulating of the tariff in this particular at least, instead of regulating it by Parliament. On this point we cannot do better than quote the concluding portion of Mr. Foster's speech on Sir Charles Tupper's amendment. It is summarily reported as follows: "Sir, I am not going to multiply words. I rise simply to call the attention of the country, and I have done

to the fact that hon. gentlemen are proposing a complete revolution in parliamentary methods, and that they cannot defend their resolution on argumentative and good grounds, that they are asking, under the cover of what they wrongly declare to be preference for Great Britain, for power to open Canada to a competition from almost every country in the world, that they are doing that, not upon any well defined line or method of procedure, but simply on the will of the men who form the government of Canada for the time being, that they propose to take the actual and virtual right to make commercial treaties with any foreign country as well as with any dependency of Great Britain, and to make that treaty entirely without the control and without the overshadowing influence of imperial treaties which Great Britain has existing today, and they do this, and ask Parliament to do this, to the utter abnegation of the duties of parliament and the highest and best privileges of parliament. Sir, we appeal to the hon. gentlemen opposite, and to this house, and to hon. gentlemen and this house we carry our appeal to the country, and we are confident, as far as we are concerned, that we have the right side of this contest, that we are standing up for the privileges of parliament, that we are standing up for the sanctity of imperial treaties, that we are standing up for the best industrial interests of this country, that we should oppose a resolution which proposes in such a drastic manner as this to take away the power of control, and the treading to the very verge of excessive danger, a path which no true Briton or true Canadian should, in this jubilee year, wish to enter upon. (Great cheering.)

It is announced that the arrangement for the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass railway has been completed between the Government and the Canadian Pacific company, but the details are not known.

Montreal Gazette: Mr. Davies has convinced himself that the proposed nation clause in British commercial treaties cannot apply to Canada's preferential position. That settles the question. German and Belgian goods will be found to be entitled to the same consideration as British. Mr. Davies is sure where there is least chance of his being right.

A copy of the Fast Atlantic Steamship contract, laid on the table of the House of Commons on Friday last, provides for a fortnightly service, after May 31st 1899, and weekly after May, 1900, of twenty-one knot boats. The eastern terminus port is Liverpool; the western terminus ports Montreal and in winter Halifax and St. John at the option of the contractors, such option to be declared before the date of the commencement of the service.

Dominion Parliament. In the House of Commons on Tuesday last week, Mr. Fielding moved the House into committee on the tariff resolutions, and explained the amendments he proposed to make in the original tariff as introduced by him five weeks previously. The finance minister showed his want of confidence in his own resolutions by proposing some amendments to them. The following are the principal changes which he proposed. Original tariff, as used below, shows the tariff as introduced by Mr. Fielding; amended tariff, as used below, shows the tariff as amended by Mr. Fielding. The tariff on books has been changed so as to divide them into two classes. The late tariff on books was six cents a pound; Fielding's tariff introduced placed the tariff on books at 10 cents a pound. The amended tariff reads as follows: Novels or literature of similar character, unbound or paper bound, not to include Christmas annuals or publications commonly known as juvenile and toy books, twenty per cent. Books, printed periodicals and pamphlets, N. E. S. not to include blank account books, copy books, ten per cent. On the free list are placed all books on the application of science to agriculture, horticulture, forestry, fish and fishing, mining, metallurgy, architecture, electric and other engineering, carpentry, shipbuilding, mechanics, dyeing, bleaching, tanning, weaving and other mechanical arts and similar industrial books, and for public and university libraries, colleges or schools. It is provided that the importers of books who have sold the same for use in a library may receive a refund of duty paid. Advertising and printed matter, on which under the old tariff a specific duty of 15 cents a pound, printed matter, 25 per cent in the original Fielding tariff, is reduced to 10 per cent. Early printed newspapers, 10 per cent in the original tariff, increased to 25 per cent. On medicines the original tariff placed duty of 35 per cent on liquids and 25 per cent on others. The amended tariff is 50 per cent on liquid medicines containing alcohol and 25 per cent on others. Lined oil, lard oil, etc., is raised from 20 per cent to 25 per cent in the amended resolution. The item of coal dust in the original has been changed back to read as

was in the late Government's tariff. Grindstones over 12 inches, 30 per cent in the original, are changed to 15 p. c. The same change is made in rough granite, freestones and all building stones and blocks of marble, marble and granite sawn only; flagstones and building stone dressed, 20 p. c. Roofing slate remains at 25 p. c. with a proviso that the duty shall not exceed 75 cents per square. Slate glass not been thirty sheets or pans, original tariff 30 p. c.; amended 35 p. c. when exceeding 25 square feet each; otherwise, 25 p. c. Silvered glass, original tariff, 30 p. c.; amended 35 p. c. Iron or steel scrap, the original tariff reduced the duty from \$4 to \$1.50; the amended tariff reduces it still further to \$1.00 per ton. Iron or steel ignis, puddled bars, etc., were \$4 a ton in the original tariff; \$3 in the amended tariff; \$2 in the original Fielding tariff, 15 p. c.; amended 10 p. c. Rolled iron or steel plates, original tariff, 15 p. c.; amended 10 p. c. Iron tubes of rolled steel, not more than 14 inches in diameter, and bicycle tubes, original tariff 15 p. c.; amended 10 p. c. On cut nails and spikes, a specific duty of a half cent per lb. is imposed instead of 50 p. c. in the original Fielding tariff. On wire nails a specific duty of 3.5 of a cent per lb. is placed instead of 35 p. c. in the original Fielding tariff. On the steel wire nails put on the ad valorem list the finance minister claimed credit for making a reform. He has thought better of it and restored the specific duty, though at a lower rate than the old one. An important change is proposed in the item of mining machinery. The late Government made free all mining machinery of the class not made in Canada. Mr. Fielding placed all mining machinery on the free list. In the amended resolution he goes back to the late government's system, except that he enumerates the machinery which he leaves dutiable and which are made free. Suction pumps, original tariff, 25 p. c.; amended 30 p. c. Wire, covered with cotton or other material, original tariff, 25 p. c.; amended 30 p. c. Wire of all metals or kinds, original tariff 30 p. c.; amended, brass wire, 10 p. c.; copper wire, 15 p. c.; iron wire, 20 p. c. Scrap lead, original tariff, 30 p. c.; amended, 15 p. c. Iron or steel, nuts, rivets, etc., original tariff, 35 p. c.; amended, 2 of a cent a pound and 25 p. c. Stereotypes, electrotypes, etc., for simulating and advertising purposes, original tariff, 2 cents per square inch; amended, 1 1/2 cents. Stereotypes for newspaper columns, original tariff 38 of a cent per square inch; amended 2 1/2 cents per square inch. Original tariff 10 p. c.; amended, 7 1/2 p. c. Jams, marmalade, etc., when imported by coast makers, original tariff 30 p. c.; amended 20 p. c. Two sub-clauses are in item 369, reducing cotton and other cloths for use in the manufacture of umbrellas and neckties when these are cut into shape in bond to 20 p. c., and in reducing stockstuffs for the manufacture of rubber boots and shoes to 15 per cent, also placing cotton duck at 25 p. c. In item 375 a sub-clause makes the duty on worsted tops from wool, such as grown in Canada, 15 p. c. Woollen and worsted yarns costing 30 cents or over per pound imported by manufacturers, 20 p. c. This clause is amended to 15 p. c. Nitro glycerine when imported for the manufacture of explosives, 10 p. c.; instead of 3 cents a pound, as in the original tariff. Buttons are divided into two classes, metal buttons, wholly of metal, and shoe, being placed at 25 p. c. instead of 35 p. c., as at first proposed. Twine and cordage, original tariff 20 p. c.; amended 25 p. c. Cut tobacco, original tariff 50 cents per lb.; amended 45 cents per lb. Other manufactured tobacco, original tariff 45 cents per lb. and 10 p. c.; amended 80 cents a pound. The tariff as introduced by Mr. Fielding imposed a duty of 15 cents a pound on raw leaf tobacco unstemmed and 14 cents on stemmed. It is proposed to change on the 1st of July to a customs duty of the same amount, the excise duty to be collected on goods now in bond. The excise duty on cigars remains at \$2.00 per thousand, proposed, but only \$1.50 to be levied on cigars made from native grown tobacco. Remarks made by Mr. Fielding show the intention of laying the excise duty in the last two or three months was to catch the importer who had endeavored to forestall the tariff by laying in a large stock of tobacco. A change is proposed in the preferential clause which provides that the government will recognize what applies to the case. An amendment is also proposed to the combine clause, which requires the decision of a court as to the fact of a combination before the government can have power to act in the premises. After recess the amended resolutions were taken up in detail. When the reciprocal or preferential resolution was reached, Sir Charles Tupper addressed the committee. He pointed out that while one month ago the finance minister almost declared the independence of Canada and a lofty scorn of all imperial treaties, he had now so far retreated as to amend his resolution recognizing these treaties. The new clause reads as follows: "The governor-in-council may extend the benefits of such reciprocal tariff to any country which may be entitled thereto by virtue of any treaty with her Majesty." Sir Charles quoted high imperialist words to show that these treaties would give to European countries the same concessions offered to England. What, then, was the object of all this? He said that the government had given special advantages to British trade. The opposition leader went on to argue that Mr. Fielding had made concessions to Great Britain and European countries, as which, if made to Britain alone at the proper time and in a proper way, would have procured for Canada a great advantage of preferential trade within the empire. If the government

was prepared to make these changes in the tariff, why did not the ministers try to obtain a preferential market for Canadian products in return, Hon. Mr. Laurier had the opportunity of his life time but had thrown it away. If this tariff is adopted preferential agreement would be impossible; Mr. Chamberlain would be disgraced; the British Empire trade league would be paralyzed, and the whole movement for an imperial league would be set back indefinitely. Sir Charles closed a strong address by proposing the following amendment: "That, in the opinion of this house, the reduction by 25 p. c. of the duties upon the imports except wine, malt liquors, spirits, spirituous liquors, liquid medicines, and articles containing alcohol, sugar, molasses and syrups of all kinds, the product of the sugar cane or beet root, tobacco, sugars and cigarettes, in favor of any country whose tariff is or may be made on the whole as low as that of schedule D is colonial trade with the United Kingdom and Canada and is in principle opposed to preferential trade of any kind with the mother country. That on several occasions the government and parliament of Canada have been misled by the majority to be pleased to take such steps as might be necessary to terminate the effect of the provisions of all treaties which prevent the parliament of the United Kingdom and the self-governing colonies adopting such tariffs as will be required for the promotion of trade within the empire, but no decisive action has been taken in this direction: That the desire for preferential trade with the United Kingdom is now general throughout Canada: That this house is of the opinion that the government of Canada should cause her majesty's government to be advised that so soon as the difficulties in the way are removed the parliament of Canada is ready to enter into a preferential trade arrangement with Great Britain and Ireland: That this house cannot consent that any arrangement made by the government of Canada with any country, involving serious considerations of tariff and revenue, should be operative without the sanction and ratification of parliament." Hon. L. H. Davies replied, speaking an hour. He began by praising Sir Charles Tupper and charging him with displaying hostility to the policy of favoring Great Britain. Then he made an argument in favor of the imperial government, and the committee rose shortly after midnight.

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At 15c and 16c per yard.

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to do so, whether he reached his conclusion about England by ascertaining that British duties on the average were lower than the Canadian? Then could he say whether the average tariff of Belgium, Germany, Japan, and China was not also lower than Canada's? If that were so, would goods from these countries be entitled to the same preference as Britain? Did it depend on some known standard, or only on the great mind and personality of the controller to determine what countries come in? Canadian producers and workmen wanted to know where they stood and in their interest he again asked the question. Mr. Patterson said he would be justified in not answering Mr. Foster's questions because of Mr. Foster's impertinence. Mr. Lister, sitting with his hat on, said Mr. Foster was insolent. Mr. Foster called Chairman Borden's attention to this when Mr. Lister rose and stated that he would repeat the remark in his place with his hat off. Mr. Foster asked the chairman to take the words down, which was done. Mr. Lister was given an opportunity to withdraw the words, which he proceeded to do. After this incident terminated Mr. Patterson said that he would explain again. His intention was to explain that when that application for preference was made "the controller would then look at the matter in all its details and all its bearings, having regard to the trade of the country," and would then call a council on it. All efforts failed to get anything clearer from the controller. Mr. Lister wanted to know whether any provision was made for withdrawing from preferential arrangement. Mr. Fielding said no consideration had been given to the possibility of a country increasing its duties after an arrangement was made. Further questions and criticisms failed to elicit any clear statement from the imperial ministers and the committee rose shortly after midnight.

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