

annum on each of the amounts so payable, in excess of the amounts actually paid, from the date when the same would have been payable to the said first day of July, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight.

Motion agreed to.

### BOUNTIES ON IRON AND STEEL.

The MINISTER OF CUSTOMS (Mr. Paterson) moved that the House resolve itself into committee to consider the following resolution :

That the provisions of chapter six of the statutes of 1897, intituled "An Act to provide for bounties on iron and steel made in Canada, shall be held to have come into force on the twenty-third day of April, in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven."

Mr. FOSTER. I would like the hon. Minister of Customs to give us an explanation of this resolution.

The MINISTER OF CUSTOMS. When the tariff resolutions were introduced on the 23rd of April last year, as a matter of course, they went into operation at once. At that time the duties on iron were reduced, and the tariff resolutions provided that the bounties that were given upon iron should be increased. It was intended that the increased bounty should take effect at the same time that the tariff resolutions took effect; but through an oversight, that was not provided for, the new scale of bounties became payable only after the Act had become law by the assent of His Excellency. That made a period from the 23rd of April to the 29th of June during which the old rate of bounty on iron would have to govern under the law as it stood. But as hon. gentlemen can understand, the import duties having been reduced, the price at once fell to that extent; and this is simply to declare that what was intended at the time that the Bounty Act was introduced, should have effect given to it.

Mr. FOSTER. My hon. friend thinks it is right, if it was the intention of the Government that the bounty payments should date from that time and if, by an error, legislation was carried through which did not provide for it, he should come down to the House and remedy that error. I think the hon. gentleman is quite correct in coming to that conclusion. The good faith of the Government, though often it does not get into the legislation, ought to get into the legislation, and my hon. friend is, of course, doing right in remedying the defect, even at a late date. But I want to call the attention of the Minister of Customs to another point which is, if anything, somewhat stronger than this, although the matter is not so important a one. When the tariff was brought down, as my hon. friend will see, it

Mr. WILFRID LAURIER.

placed upon rubber belting a duty of 25 per cent. That was done after deliberation by the Government, they set rubber belting at 25 per cent, they passed that into legislation, and that legislation went through the House to the Senate. But in its passage to the Senate, or on its passage to the ultimate signature of the Governor General the figure 25 was changed to 20 and rubber belting has been under the disability of a 20 per cent duty from that time up to the present. I believe there is no doubt at all that 25 per cent was intended to be placed upon rubber belting, and was placed upon it by the resolution, and was placed upon it by the Act which ensued on those resolutions, and was passed through this House. Now correspondence has taken place. These gentlemen certainly have a right to ask the Government to put them in the position that they were given by the legislation as it passed this House. But, more, they made sales and carried on their business transactions for a certain length of time on that basis, and they were involved in great trouble with their customers, their customers saying to them: You represented to us that rubber belting was 25 per cent; we have bought, and now we find that it is only 20 per cent. All these things taken into account would show, I think, that if my hon. friend wishes in this case to correct an error, which he is perfectly right in doing, he ought to do it in the other case, too. Aside from the merits of the question which were settled when the hon. gentleman brought down and carried that tariff through the House, there is the good faith with the manufacturers themselves. I would strongly recommend my hon. friend to carry out what was the intention of the department, and to make the rectification in the case of rubber belting as well as in this case. The correspondence shows, and the legislation shows, just how the error crept in, or at what stage it crept in. I suppose it was merely a clerical error.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I think my hon. friend was not in the House yesterday when this matter was up.

Mr. FOSTER. Yes.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I think the error hardly occurred in the way the hon. gentleman mentioned. However, the substantial result was as he states, and as I stated yesterday. I would be very glad to consider the matter, though I am not able to give a definite answer at this moment. It may be still treated before the final stage is made. I will look very closely into it, and as the Minister of Customs has had it before him, with the information he has received and that which has been given to us in the House, I think we shall be able to give an answer within a day or two.

Mr. McDOUGALL. I would ask the Minister of Customs whether the resolution be-