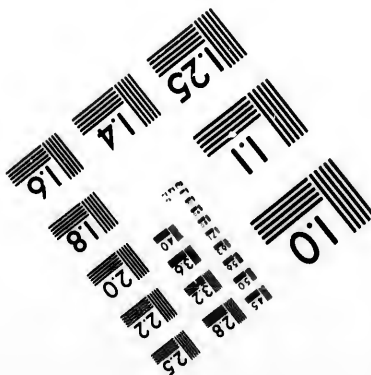
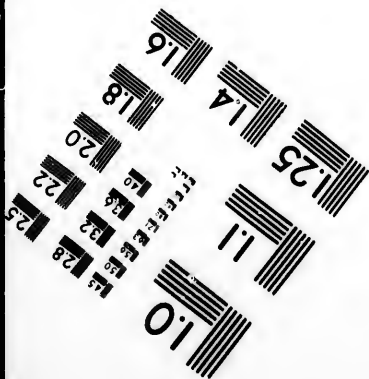
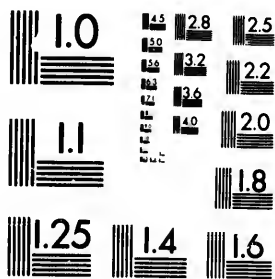


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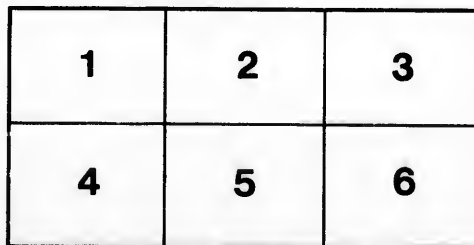
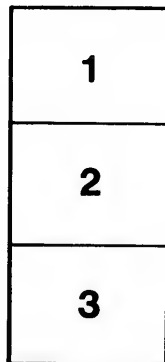
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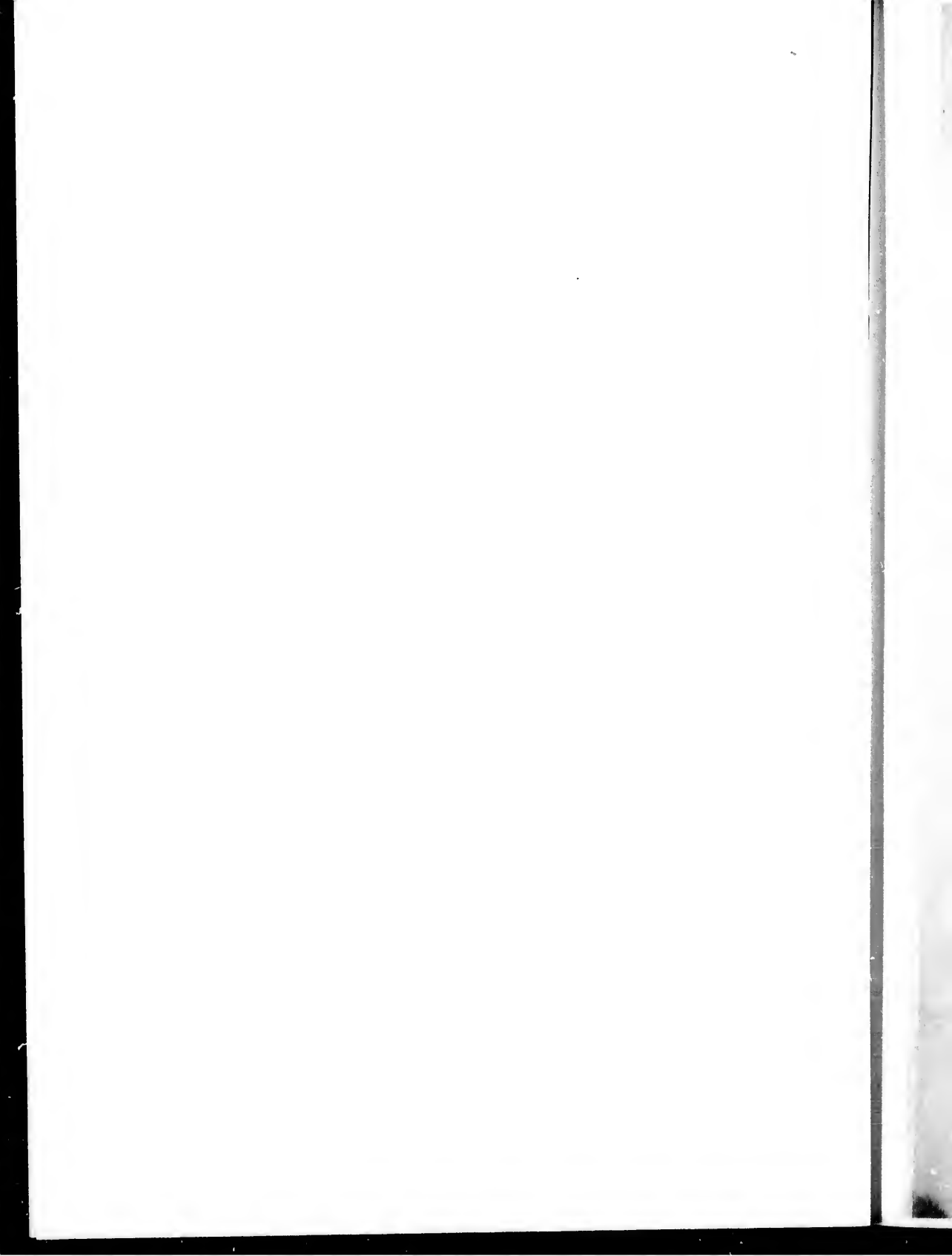
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SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

Mr. BUNSTER, M.P.,

ON THE

BRITISH COLUMBIA TARIFF.

WEDNESDAY, 7th MARCH, 1877.

(From the *Hansard Report*.)

Mr. BUNSTER moved:

"That the Hon. do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolution:—That in the opinion of this House the interests of British Columbia will be promoted by the adoption of a Special Tariff for the protection of the Farming, Mining and Manufacturing interests of that Province, until the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway."

He said that, four years ago, he had the honour of bringing this subject before the House. Since then, circumstances had occurred which he thought would enable the House to judge of the matter in a more favourable light; the question possessing additional interest to entitle it to their favourable consideration. He was glad the Speech from the Throne had referred to the visit made by the Governor-General to British Columbia last summer.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT said the motion could not possibly be in order.

Mr. BUNSTER said if the hon. the Finance Minister would bear with him for a few moments, he would show that it was in order. It was not fair or honest that, whenever the members from British Columbia rose in the House, they should be interrupted in this way. It was rather singular, to say the least, that the hon. the Finance Minister should interrupt him when

he mentioned the circumstance of the visit of the Governor-General to British Columbia last year.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT said the hon. member should place the motion in the hands of the Speaker before he proceeded to speak to it.

Mr. BUNSTER said he would do so at the proper time.

Mr. SPEAKER said he looked into the matter a few moments ago and found that the motion handed in was one of an abstract character, and therefore would be in order. Whether it was exactly consistent with the notice was another question.

Mr. BLAKE said the House had only to do with the motion on the notice paper, and that was the only one the hon. member could move.

Mr. SPEAKER said it had occurred to him that, looking at the motion as it appeared on the paper, it was entirely out of order; and he had, therefore, examined the motion itself. In his opinion it was in order, though it might be a very inconvenient abstract resolution.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said that what appeared on the notice paper was merely a synopsis of the motion.

Mr. BUNSTER, continuing, said that, when His Excellency the Governor-General visited British Columbia last season, he was well received, as he deserved to be; and he, also, well received the farmers who waited on him *en masse*, and laid their grievances on this subject before him. His Excellency promised to aid them as much as lay in his power. It was reported that he (Lord Dufferin) had said that the farmers needed protection, but it was a question for his Ministers to deal with, the only thing he (Lord Dufferin) could do being to recommend the matter to them.

Mr. BLAKE: Hear, hear.

Mr. BUNSTER said the hon. the Minister of Justice would not find him saying anything except what was correct and in the interests of British Columbia. His Excellency, having given the farmers a hearing and assured them that he would give all the assistance in his power, they (the farmers), a large and influential body, had solicited him (Mr. Bunster) to bring the matter before Parliament, and ask that a special tariff should be granted in the interests of the Province. No doubt it would be argued that a special or differential tariff could not be extended to any particular part of the Dominion, but it should be remembered that British Columbia was labouring at present under the disadvantages of a tariff almost altogether opposed to the wants and wishes of the people of that Province. British Columbia did not enjoy the privileges acquired under the Washington Treaty by other Provinces of the Dominion, and upon that fact he based the claim to have a special tariff framed in her interests. It was a matter of justice that that distant Province should receive the consideration on this subject it was so well entitled to. Their markets had been flooded with American produce, to the detriment of the farmers, ever since the Province came into the Union. The farmers on the island of San Juan, who felt they were labouring under great injustice in this matter as subjects of Great Britain, now possessed a market which they would not have obtained if they had remained part and parcel of the Dominion. He claimed,

on behalf of British Columbia, that, inasmuch as there was already a differential tariff against the Province, the Government should take the subject into its favourable consideration and grant what was now so urgently needed and required, thus fulfilling the promise, or partial promise, made by His Excellency to the farmers of that country—a promise, he might add, that had made their hearts rejoice, giving them confidence, as it did, that they would be fairly and honourably dealt with by the Dominion authorities.

Mr. SPEAKER said that it was well known His Excellency could not make a statement on public affairs unless under the responsibility of Ministers of the Crown. It was not, therefore, strictly in order for any hon. member to inform the House as to what His Excellency did or did not say. His Excellency's name should not be used for the purpose of influencing the opinion of the House.

Mr. BUNSTER said he would also call the attention of the Government to a resolution passed in 1876 by the Local Legislature of British Columbia. It read as follows:—

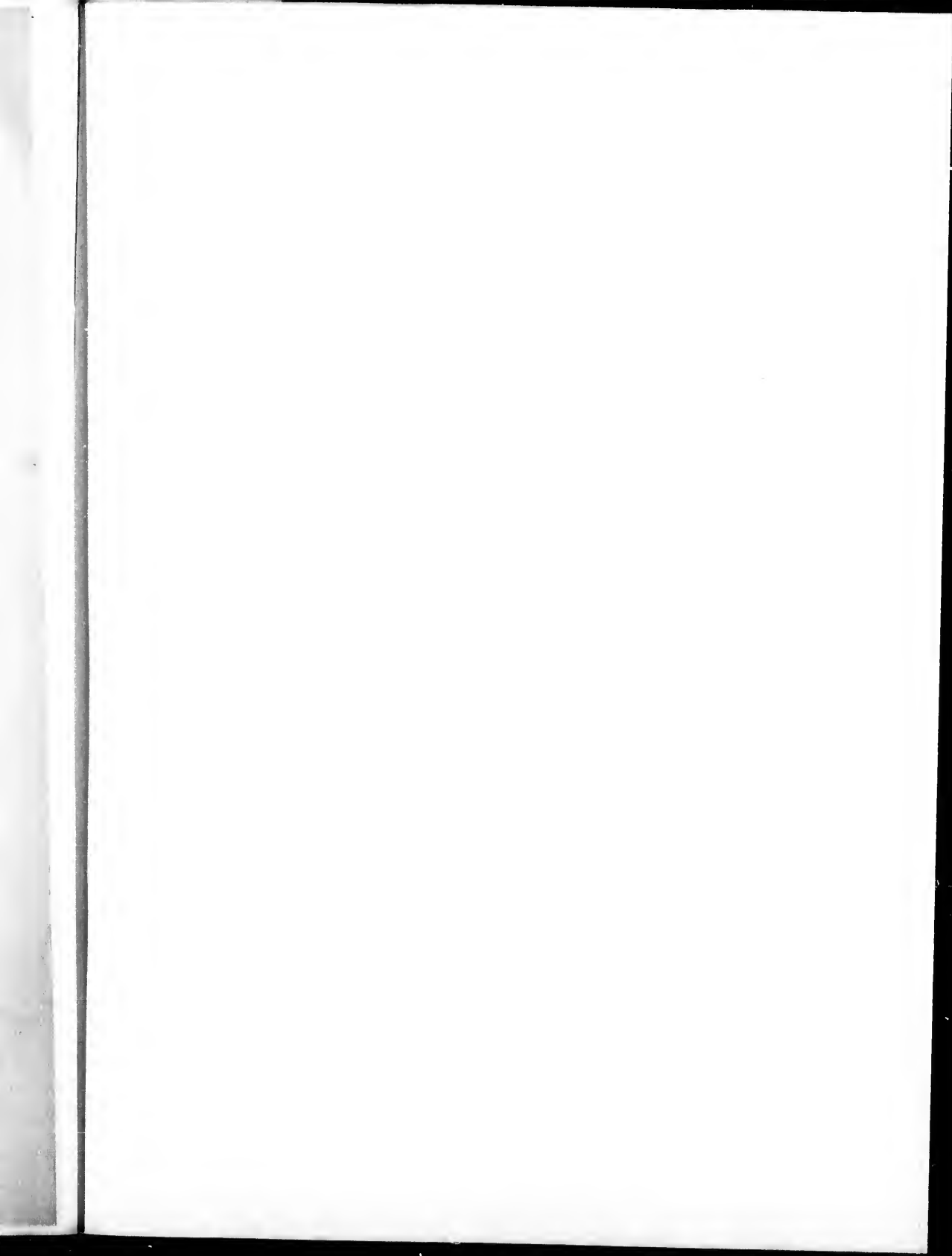
“That, whereas, by the 7th clause of the Terms of Union, it is provided that the Customs Tariff and Excise Duties existing within the Province at the date of union should continue in force until the railway from the Pacific coast and the system of railways in Canada should be connected, unless by decision of the Legislature of British Columbia the Tariff and Excise Laws of Canada should sooner be adopted;

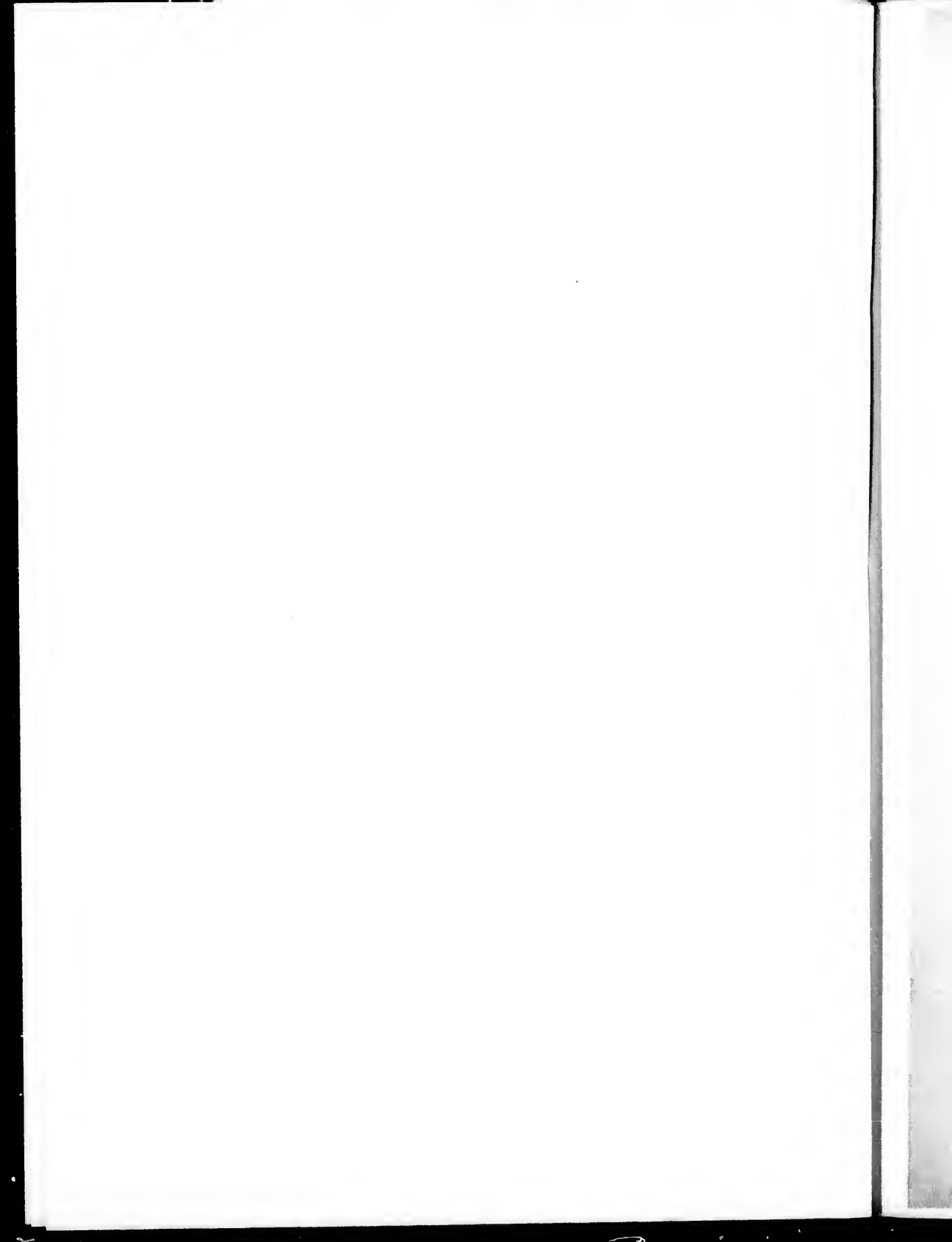
“And whereas, owing principally to the anticipated early construction and completion of the Pacific Railway, the Legislature of British Columbia adopted the Canadian Tariff and Excise Laws;

“And whereas the agricultural portion of the community throughout the Province have suffered severely from the adoption of the Canadian Tariff, which, while admitting some farm products free, imposed but a low rate of duty on all others—(he might say that scarcely any duties were imposed on foreign products)—and as connection between the Pacific Coast and the railway system of Canada is not likely to be accomplished so soon as was at first understood;

“And whereas, moreover, the neighbouring possessions of the United States of America overflow with a surplus of commodities which this Province can produce in sufficiency for more than its present need;

“Therefore, your memorialists respectfully ask that your Excellency may be





pleased to sanction the adoption for this Province, of the following changes in the tariff now in operation."

The changes in the tariff they desired to secure were the removal of the duties levied on mining and agricultural machinery; and, in lieu thereof, the imposition of a small tax on the cereals which could be produced in the Province of British Columbia. This would be only a fair and perfectly just proceeding, and if the Government wished to do the Province justice they would certainly accede to it; and this could be done without inflicting any injury on the other Provinces of the Dominion. One duty imposed by the American Government militated heavily against their interests. They employed Indians in "gathering" oil, which was excluded from the American market, and they were consequently obliged to send it to England. They did not share, it was to be remembered, in the benefits accruing from the Washington Treaty. He thought he had shown that it was perfectly practicable for the Government to grant British Columbia a modified tariff, in order that the bone and sinew of the country might not be driven out of it, and that their farming lands might not again become portions of the howling wilderness. If those other Provinces were overrun with American produce, as they were in British Columbia, he was certain that the consequent disadvantage would be felt, and no one could therefore be blamed under such circumstances for defending the interests of his constituents; particularly if, as he (Mr. Bunster) was, supported by the Legislature and the entire population of his Province. British Columbia only desired to secure an exceptional tariff until such a time as Canada would carry out her pledges and build the railway. It was also to be borne in mind that, since the Province entered Confederation, the tariff had been raised 2½ per cent. on articles which they consumed. Unfortunately, they did not have a sufficiently large population to encourage manufactures, and even if this were the case they would in this relation be shut out of the American market. Many intelligent and thrifty farmers had gone to British Columbia

from Ontario—some on the recommendation of his friends, and some on his own recommendation, which recommendation he now regretted having given, because they had said to him: "You have good land we know, because we see it before us, but you have no market; it is better to go to the States than to come to your country." Hence they lost settlers who were as good subjects and citizens as could be found anywhere in the world, simply because they lacked the small degree of protection which they desired, and which was necessary to establish a proper feeling of confidence. He earnestly implored the Government to take the matter into their favourable consideration. He thought that a tax on cereals would be preferable to the tax on malt. He asked hon. gentlemen to support him in his endeavour to secure what was simply a matter of justice for his Province. He would propose to add to the motion the proviso: "Until the Canada Pacific Railroad be built."

Mr. CARTWRIGHT: Does this imply compensation for any other unavoidable difficulty that may occur?

Mr. BUNSTER: The unavoidable delay will probably come up in another form. British Columbia is not insensible to the injustice done her.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT: I must inform my hon. friend that we cannot allow such a resolution to pass. However desirous we may be to meet his wishes, and those of other gentlemen from British Columbia, it is scarcely necessary for me to say that it is impossible for this Dominion to permit each separate Province to have a separate tariff adapted to its own especial needs; therefore, I hope that my hon. friend will not insist on pressing his motion. He has stated his case and his grievances, and I think it would not be advisable for him to press a resolution which I think the sense of the House will inevitably condemn.

Mr. DEWDNEY said that, prior to entering the Union, they had had the alternative of either retaining their own tariff or of accepting the Canadian tariff, which, if not then accepted, was to come into force when the railway was built. He was willing, however, to let the matter drop.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said he thought that as his hon. friend from Vancouver had had an opportunity for making his explanations, which would go to the country and to the hon. gentleman's constituents, he (Mr. Bunster) had better adopt the suggestion of the Finance Minister, and withdraw his motion. Its passage, of course, was hopeless.

Mr. BUNSTER said that he would comply with the suggestions of the Finance Minister and of the leader of the Opposition, but nevertheless he would probably move the motion in

amendment to the motion of the right hon. member for Kingston or before going into Committee of Supply. He would merely add that British Columbia had been worse treated, and therefore had more cause to feel discontented than any other Province in the Dominion. He hoped the Government might see their way to granting what he had asked for at some future time, and bring it down as part and parcel of their policy.

Motion, with leave of the House, *withdrawn*.

