

We are marching fast and steadily towards free trade. We must meet the views of the people of the Lower Provinces, who are hostile to high tariffs, and the demand of the Imperial authorities that we should not tax their manufactures so heavily as—in their phrase—almost to deprive them of our market. It was distinctly and officially stated the other day, in Newfoundland, that assurance had been given to the Government of Newfoundland that the views of the Canadian Government are unmistakably in this direction. And I do not think there is any mistake about that, either. To shew how people at home, too, expect our tariff to come down, I may refer to the speech of Mr. HAMBURY TRACY, in seconding the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne, in the House of Commons the other day. He could not stop, after saying generally that he was pleased with this Confederation movement, without adding that he trusted it would result in a very considerable decrease in the absurdly high and hostile tariff at present prevailing in Canada. I have not here the exact words, but that was their purport. Well, if the customs tariff is to come down largely, we must look for a decrease of revenue. I am free to admit that a reduction of the tariff on certain articles, or even some measure of reduction all round, might be no material loss, or might even be a gain, to the revenue—in ordinary or prosperous times, that is to say. But when the object of reducing the tariff is to meet other exigencies than those of revenue, one can hardly hope to get such a tariff as shall give us the largest revenue attainable. And besides, no one can deny that we are about entering upon a time, commercially speaking, that may be termed hard. We have had, for some time past, pretty heavy importations, and our best informed and shrewdest commercial men tell us that we are going to have, for some time to come, pretty light importations. We are not to have a plethoric purse, even under ordinary drafts upon it, for some years.

HON. MR. HOLTON—The hard time is come now.

MR. DUNKIN—Yes, it is come, or is close on us, and it rather threatens to last. And if, with this state of things before us, to oblige the Imperial authorities and the Lower Provinces, under pressure of an inevitable state necessity, we are to reduce our customs rates, or any number of them, below what I may call their figure of largest productive-

ness, then surely it is little to say that we cannot look forward to an increase in the revenue, or even to a continuance of our present income, and it is rather strange that we should be called upon, withal, at the same time so to change our whole system as to involve ourselves in the enormous extravagances here contemplated. No taxing scheme can ever meet the case. Nothing can be looked to, but a device of borrowing without limit—the incurring of an amount of debt that, in interest and sinking fund, must prove to be simply unendurable hereafter. (Hear, hear.) But, in fact, we cannot even borrow to any large amount unless under false pretences. We cannot borrow without telling tales of our condition, resources and expectations, that will in the end be found out to be lies. We must awaken hopes in the minds of money lenders abroad, that cannot but prove delusive—the memory of which must work us hereafter an aggravation of punishment that we shall then scarcely need. And when that time of reckoning shall have come, then staggering under the load, without credit at home or abroad, the country will have to choose whether it will have heavy direct taxation—for heavy such taxation then must be—or have recourse to more or less of repudiation; or even run some risk of both. Sir, if ever that time shall come, the public men of that day and the people on whom the burthen will then press, will not bless the memory of those who held out the false hopes and inducements under which it is now sought to decoy us into wild expenditure and crushing debt. (Hear, hear.) Well, Mr. SPEAKER, I now pass to another branch of my subject altogether. There is a further salient contrast between the American system and the system proposed for our adoption. The people of the United States, when they adopted their Constitution, were one of the nations of the earth. They formed their whole system with a view to national existence. They had fought for their independence, and had triumphed; and still in the flush of their triumph, they were laying the foundations of a system absolutely national. Their Federal Government was to have its relations with other nations, and was sure to have plenty to do upon entering the great family of nations. But we—what are we doing? Creating a new nationality, according to the advocates of this scheme. I hardly know whether we are to take the phrase for ironical, or not. Is it a reminder