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A SPEECH
ON THE TREATY OF NAVIGATION AND
COMMERCE BETWEEN SARDINIA
AND FRANCE,

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF DEPUTIES AT TURIN BY

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE ON THE 8TH

Cavour

AND 9TH OF APRIL, 1852.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

R. H. MAJOR, Esq.

OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.



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INTRODUCTION.

FEW countries have found themselves placed in a more difficult financial position than that in which Sardinia was after the disastrous campaign of the spring of 1849. With an empty treasury the government had to provide for meeting the expenses consequent upon the foreign occupation, which lasted several months, to pay off the expenses of two disastrous wars, to supply occupation to a great number of unfortunate men who came to seek in Piedmont a refuge from the effects of the reaction which throughout the rest of Italy was triumphant.

Afterwards it had to provide for the payment of the enormous war-indemnity stipulated in favour of Austria at the peace of Milan, and it had also to provide for the carrying out the great public works undertaken by Charles Albert, which could not be interrupted without involving immense loss.

When it is considered that these difficulties were aggravated by the existence of paper having a forced currency, it must be granted that M. d'Azeglio and his colleagues, in accepting power the day after the battle of Novara, gave evidence of a high courage and unlimited devotion to the king and to their country.

The new minister of finance, M. Nigra, provided for the immediate wants by a voluntary loan; by the sale of some ancient funds belonging to the state, and the issue of treasury debentures, which, without having a forced currency, were accepted without complaint by the employés of the government and the army contractors.

Some months after, tranquillity and confidence were restored; and all fear of reaction having disappeared, thanks to the loyalty of the young king, the minister thought that the time was arrived when a foreign loan might be contracted.

He succeeded in obtaining it on conditions which, considering the financial and economical circumstances of Europe, may be regarded as advantageous.

The first loan, negotiated in October, 1849, with Messrs. Rothschild, was followed by two others, contracted with the same house in the following year. With the funds thus supplied to the treasury, we were enabled to pay with punctuality the war-indemnity due to Austria, to liquidate the expenses in arrear of the two campaigns of 1848 and 1849, and lastly, to carry on with vigour the works of the two great railway lines, which divide the country in the form of a cross: namely, that from Turin to Genoa, and from Genoa to the Lago Maggiore.

All this, however, was only providing for extraordinary necessities by having recourse to extraordinary sources of supply, such as loans and exchequer-bills; the government had to consider how they

might permanently increase the receipts of the treasury, in order to meet the liabilities imposed henceforth upon the state by the new loans. For this purpose it became necessary to resolve on imposing new taxes.

The ministry did not shrink from this ungrateful task, which was rendered extremely difficult by the necessity of obtaining the serious and decided concurrence of a young and inexperienced House of Deputies, who could not but feel the keenest repugnance to commencing their parliamentary labours with the infliction of new burthens upon their constituents.

In the session of 1850, the minister of finance obtained an increase in the registration duties and an extension of the stamp duties.

In the following session the parliament voted a new house tax, a tax on trade and manufactures, a tax on revenues possessed by corporations, and lastly, a considerable increase in the legacy duties, both on those left in the direct line, and those left to collateral branches.

Lastly, in the present session, M. Nigra's successor, the Count De Cavour, has proposed a poll-tax and one on personal property; an increase of one-fourth on the land tax; the extension to all the provinces of the state of the duties on the consumption of wine; and, lastly, various modifications of the registration and stamp acts, with the view of rendering these two important branches of the revenue of the state more productive.

The taxes in 1850 and 1851 have already increased the government resources by 10,000,000. Those under discussion by parliament at the present moment are calculated to produce 10,000,000 more.

The budget of the receipts of 1847 amounted to the sum of 87,000,000; that of the present year, calculated at 102,000,000, on account of the increase of the consumption of tobacco in 1847, and the new revenue from the railroad from Turin to Arquata, will at length reach the sum of 104,000,000, in consequence of the increased receipts from indirect duties; that of the next year will probably amount to 114,000,000; and that of 1854, a period in which the great network of railroads undertaken by the government will be completed, will certainly reach the amount of 117,000,000.

In spite of this successive increase in the receipts, we cannot assert that the budget of 1854 will show an exact balance between expenditure and income, for, without deceiving ourselves, we could not calculate the expenses of that year at less than 120,000,000, it being well understood that in this sum is not included the outlay for public works; while on the other hand there are to be included in the 120,000,000 the expenses consequent upon supporting a land force of more than 40,000 men, and upon an increase of the navy, as well as several reproductive expenses which did not exist in 1847. At the same time, while the apparent deficit will be reduced to 3,000,000 or 4,000,000, it may be said that in reality it does not exist. In fact, the sum carried to the budget of the present year for the sinking fund amounts to 7,000,000. In 1854 it will be still

more; and it follows that if in 1854 the deficit does not exceed 6,000,000, it will be less than the sum devoted to the paying off our old debts. In this state of things it would suffice, in order to show this perfect balance, to adopt the system practised in England for more than thirty years; namely, the devoting to the sinking fund only the surplus of the receipts over the expenses.

In order to arrive at this result, great sacrifices have been and will still be necessary. It has been necessary to submit to the augmentation of the duties which pressed upon exciseable articles before the late events, to the extent of more than 30 per cent. The new duties (the duties in 1847 amounted to between 78,000,000 and 80,000,000, and they will be increased to between 108,000,000 and 110,000,000) have been voted and discussed by the parliament with a patriotism worthy of admiration. The country endures them with wonderful resignation; this is owing to the fact that Piedmont used to pay very few taxes, compared with the other nations of Europe, and that even with all the above taxes it will pay always less than France, compared with the population and the territorial extent. But it being necessary that this increase of taxes should be effected in very few years, it was to be feared that they might dry up the sources of public wealth, and bring on a crisis, if the old economical system was allowed to remain, founded as it was upon protection. This is what the Sardinian ministry felt; and they therefore decided on bringing forward at once both the financial laws and the laws of economical reform.

After the year 1850, the government resolutely declared its intention of carrying out free trade, by modifying successively all the laws which had been made for the sole purpose of protecting certain privileged branches of industry.

The government began by the abolition of the different navigation duties. The honour of this first but decisive measure belongs to a man, who by the sublime courage displayed on his death bed has shown how possible it is to unite in the catholic breast the most sincere and pure religious sentiments with perfect independence of the court of Rome,—the noble and generous Sta. Rosa, whose loss Piedmont still laments, after a lapse of two years.

In the same session the minister Azeglio carried the reform of the postal tariff, by means of which the system of the uniform rate has been substituted in Piedmont, as it had been in England, for the progressive duties calculated by distance.

The following year the new minister of commerce, M. de Cavour, successor and friend of M. de Sta. Rosa, undertook the total and radical reform of the customs' tariff. In order with less difficulty to attain the end which he proposed to himself, M. de Cavour began by obtaining the sanction of Parliament to the treaty which he had himself negotiated with Belgium as to the reduction of the duties affecting those branches of industry which previously had enjoyed the highest protection; namely, cotton threads and stuffs, woollen fabrics, iron, and some other articles of secondary importance.

These reductions, adopted in the first instance with Belgium, were immediately extended to England by virtue of the treaty concluded at London by Lord Palmerston and the Marquis E. V. Azeglio, and afterwards by successive treaties concluded in the course of last year with France, the Zollverein, Switzerland, Holland, and lastly with Austria. Thanks to these treaties, it may be said that there no longer exist any differential duties, and that the reductions granted as a favour to some powers are now become matters of common right.

The supporters of the protective system opposed with all their power the reductions sanctioned by these treaties; but as that with Belgium was approved by an immense majority, they ceased opposing either the other treaties or the reform of the tariff, which in consequence of the changes effected in the duties on the principal articles imported from abroad, had become a real necessity. On the contrary, with a fairness which does him honour, M. de Revel, the chief of that party, gave his support to the ministry at the time of the discussion of the treaty with Austria, which met with serious difficulties in the house of deputies, excited more by political motives than by considerations of economy. The reform in the tariff was accomplished by a general measure, by which nearly all the duties on articles which had not been included in the treaties were modified. This measure was sanctioned on the 14th of July, 1851, and the new duties were put in force on the 1st of June, 1851, for the articles comprised in the treaties, and on the 15th of July for the others.

On looking at the whole of the customs' reforms effected in the course of the last year, we find that the reduction of the primitive duties may be estimated at 40 per cent.; although on several articles, as cotton thread for instance, the reduction has been much more considerable. We will only quote a few facts in order to give an idea of the extent of change effected in the Sardinian system.

The duties on iron have been reduced from

	16	to 10 fr. the 100 kilo-
		grammes
On cast-iron ware	16	to 8 " " "
On cotton thread No. 20,	from 90	to 20 " " "
On cotton thread No. 40,	from 75	to 40 " " "
On cloth stuffs,	from 3.30	to 2 per kil. valued at
		10 fr. and under
		per metre
Of less value, and not milled		
or carded	from 4.50	to 3 fr. per kil.
On refined sugars, from	45	to 25 fr. the metrical
		quintal
On coffees	from 70	to 35 fr. "

Besides the reduction of duties of which we have only specified the most remarkable, a great number of duties bearing on primary articles were suppressed. We will only mention those on cotton

wools, and wools which produced an average revenue of more than 100,000 francs.

The new customs' system has been in effect for nearly a year, and we may already begin to appreciate the consequences it must have, both in an economical and financial point of view. The protectionists assured us that it must have the effect, if not of destroying, at least of causing an immense disturbance in the principal branches of national industry, and moreover that it would cause a loss to the treasury which they estimated at from 6,000,000 to 7,000,000. These gloomy prognostications have not been at all verified. Facts, both in Piedmont and England, have given a striking contradiction to the advocates of privileges and monopolies. Not one of the branches of manufacture which they said must be destroyed from foreign competition, has failed. Some of them have been slightly affected by difficulties varying in degree; others, on the contrary, have never been in a more prosperous condition than since they have ceased to be enormously protected. We will especially mention the spinning and manufacture of cotton. The spinners, who at one moment thought themselves ruined, having taken courage, improved their mode of working, brought their machines to a state of perfection, and thereby succeeded not only in meeting the competition of the English in our own markets, but also in competing with foreign products in the markets of neighbouring countries, especially in the duchies of Parma and Modena. The state of the importations of cotton wools proves that this assertion is far from being exaggerated. In fact, in the last half of the year 1851 we imported 66 metrical quintals of cotton;

in the corresponding six months			
of 1850 we imported	17	”	”
Increase	49	”	”
In the first quarter of this year			
the importation was	26	”	”
It had been in 1851	9	”	”
Increase	17	”	”

These figures appear to us to speak with irresistible eloquence; but there is nothing astonishing in these results if we reflect that as our manufacturers receive the raw material direct from America, it does not come dearer to them than to the English, thanks to the small expense at which our Sardinian sailors work. When we reflect also that labour is cheaper than at Manchester, and lastly, that the motive power which we employ is gratuitously supplied by nature—with these elements of prosperity there can be no doubt that the cotton trade in Sardinia is destined to undergo an immense development, and to be one of the principal sources of the wealth of the country.

The woollen manufactures have been more shaken than those of cotton; perhaps, from having been more protected, they were in a more backward condition. Nevertheless they show no sign of de-

cay; on the contrary, if we may judge by the number and perfection of the machines which our principal manufacturers have for some months been receiving from abroad, we may trust that they will soon be in a condition to rival the fabrics both of France and of Belgium—both in our own and in foreign markets.

The iron manufactures have not abated in the amount of their production, for having improved their products, they have not had to yield to any great depression of price. We cannot, however, conceal from ourselves the fact that as charcoal must be used in producing iron, this branch of industry is not susceptible of great development, but, on the contrary, is condemned to confine itself to the production of iron of superior quality, for which the mines in the Alps are particularly adapted.

As to the secondary branches of industry affected by the reform, they have not suffered to any extent worth mentioning: not one of them has sunk hitherto in the struggle.

The financial results of the new system are equally satisfactory. To prove this, it is sufficient to compare the produce of the customs before and after the application of the new tariff. In the last six months of 1850 the customs gave a result of . . . 9,965,000 f.
In the six corresponding months of 1851 . . . 9,485,000 f.

Decrease 480,000 f.

During the first four months of this year the customs have produced 6,355,000 f.
During the four corresponding months of last year 5,450,000 f.

Increase 905,000 f.

If it be objected that the product of the last year was affected by the disturbance occasioned by the discussion of the treaties and of the customs' reform, the comparison of 1852 with 1850 and the preceding years would confirm our assertions. In fact, the produce of the four first months of 1852 had given in the continental provinces,

Idem, 1850	6,355,280 f.	Increase of 1852 compared with	1850	80,593 f.
„ 1849	5,733,361 f.		1849	621,919 f.
„ 1848	4,603,929 f.		1848	1,751,351 f.
„ 1847	5,932,835 f.		1847	422,445 f.

These figures prove to demonstration that the radical reform effected in the tariff, far from causing an injury to the treasury, has been remarkably advantageous to it, and that in fact it has increased the receipts of the State, while it has afforded enormous relief to the taxpayer.

The gain to the taxpayer cannot be estimated at less than 7,000,000 or 8,000,000 per annum. In fact, if the old tariff were still in force, the importations effected in the last twelve months would have had to bear an over assessment equivalent to the amount above indicated. If the treasury, in spite of this advantage realized by the taxpayer, has not suffered any loss, it is because the number of articles subject to duty has enormously increased.

It is not, however, to be supposed that the consumption has increased in the proportion of the figures which we have just quoted. The increase in the customs' receipts is due in a great measure to the decrease of smuggling, which has almost entirely ceased, whereas it was formerly carried on on an immense scale.

The extent of frontier of the Sardinian States compared with the superficial area of their territory, the facility offered to illicit trade by the greater part of the lines which separate them from foreign countries, caused smuggling, under the influence of very high duties, to attain an enormous development. The Minister of Finance, in the discussion of the treaties, estimated the amount of goods fraudulently imported at one-third of the whole of the importations. Experience has confirmed this assertion, which only rested upon approximative data.

All those who consider that the moral interests of the population are not less sacred than their material interests, will certainly value the almost entire discontinuance of smuggling, as not the least of the benefits arising from the great reform which Piedmont has accomplished in imitation of Great Britain.

Encouraged by the success which had crowned its first measures, the Sardinian Government resolved to extend to the products of the soil the principles which it had applied to the products of industry, and to reduce its duties upon foreign articles of food.

As the country produced a great quantity of wines, the producers had at length, under the late regime brought heavy duties to bear upon foreign liquids. Before 1847 wine of the value of 20 f. and under was subject to a duty of 16 f. per hectolitre; if of a higher value, 10 f. per hectolitre, in addition to 30 per cent. on the value. And brandies of 22 degrees and under, 22 f. per hectolitre; of higher degree, 40 f. per hectolitre. In 1830 a treaty entered into with France reduced the duties to 14 f. for the wines above 20 per hectolitre; to 10 f. for the wines below that value. And for brandies, to 18 f. per hectolitre on those of 22 degrees and lower, and to 30 f. per hectolitre on those of a higher degree.

In spite of these reductions, the duties were still highly protective, especially as regarded common wines. In fact, as the wines of Languedoc could not be valued at more than 10 francs the hectolitre, it followed that they had to pay a duty of cent. per cent. in order to be admitted into Piedmont.

The reduction of the duty on wines, however, presented serious difficulties. The greater part of the continental provinces and of Sardinia being covered with vineyards, there was reason to fear that any tolerably bold reform would raise amongst the producers and by reaction in the Parliament an opposition difficult to overcome.

In order to obtain its object the more easily, the Ministry resolved to make the reduction of the duties on wines and brandies the object of negotiation with France, in order to obtain in return a diminution of the duties which press upon two of our principal ar-

ties of exportation, oils and cattle. With this view a new treaty was signed with France, which, amongst the mutual concessions stipulated therein, reduced the various duties on wines to the uniform duty of 3. 30 per hectolitre; and those on brandies to 5. 50 of 22 degrees and under, and to 10. 00 on those of a higher degree.

When the treaty became known, a strong feeling manifested itself amongst the proprietors of vineyards. This feeling, however, was not permanent in the provinces of Piedmont; it did not assume a political colour, and soon subsided. The liberal party had too openly proved the theories of free trade, to be able to embrace the cause of the producers of wine, and as for the retrograde party, it is too weak to exert any serious influence upon the public or upon the masses.

The case was not the same in Savoy; although, taken as a whole, this part of the Sardinian States does not produce as much wine as is necessary for its own consumption. The province of Chambéry possesses a great quantity of vineyards, and the vineyard proprietors exercise a considerable influence; it was consequently natural that they should excite a very stirring agitation in the capital of Savoy. The retrograde party, which is much more numerous and powerful in that city than elsewhere, showed an extreme eagerness in taking advantage of it. It succeeded in giving to a purely local question the character of a national question for Savoy.

Savoy, indeed, possesses many liberal members, but unfortunately they were absent at the time that the treaty was presented to the House, so that at the outset the Savoyard deputation appeared unanimous in rejecting the treaty.

At a later period, however, this sad state of things became modified; several members hastened to quit their mountains to come and protest against the illiberal doctrines of their colleagues; nevertheless they did not succeed in destroying the impression which had been produced by them, and it was easy to see that the principal obstacle which the treaty would have to encounter in the Houses of Parliament would arise from the opinion that the great majority of Savoy was hostile to it. For this reason the Minister of Finance, in the speech which he delivered on that occasion, chose to treat the question specially as in connection with Savoy.

This speech, notwithstanding its special character, contains an exact and conscientious exposition of the economical and political principles which for three years have guided the Cabinet of M. Azeglio. For this reason we have thought it might prove interesting to the English public, whom we know to be animated by a warm sympathy for a generous nation, which, in the midst of the most serious difficulties and obstacles of every kind, has been able to continue faithful to the cause of order and liberty, and this whilst effecting an economical reform not less extensive and considerable in its degree than that which has been effected by a series of distinguished statesmen in England with such brilliant success.

HOUSE OF DEPUTIES.

SPEECH ON THE TREATY OF NAVIGATION AND COMMERCE WITH FRANCE,

*Delivered by the Minister of Finance at the sittings of the
8th and 9th of April, 1852.*

GENTLEMEN,

AS the question seems more particularly to affect Savoy, I beg permission of the House to offer a reply in the French language to the honourable gentlemen who have preceded me. (*Expression of earnest attention.*)

Of all the treaties which have been submitted to parliamentary discussion, there is no doubt that the present is the one which has met with the most continued and earnest opposition.

We have seen combined against it members occupying the most opposite seats of the House; we have seen the representatives of the extreme left shaking hands with the members of the extreme right, and we have seen both using the self-same arguments in order to oppose the provisions of this treaty.

Nevertheless the treaty which is now submitted to you is nothing more than the strict application of principles to which you have repeatedly given your solemn sanction. I will say more, Gentlemen, it is the most profitable application that you have yet made of those principles, and the results of which must prove most advantageous. And I believe it will be easy for me to establish the correctness of this proposition. This I shall endeavour to do while examining the principal

clauses of the treaty, both as they bear upon the general welfare, and as they affect the particular interests which are united in opposition to it.

And first, Gentlemen, it is easy to prove by a mathematical demonstration that when once the principles of free trade have been established, if we wish to proceed gradually and by a rational and logical process in the application of them, we must commence by applying them to agricultural produce before we apply them to articles connected with manufacturing industry.

Unfortunately, in order to demonstrate this proposition, I shall be compelled for a few moments to have recourse to theoretical illustration. And for doing so I must offer my apologies to the honourable M. Menabrea; but I cannot help expressing my surprise that a gentleman of such learning and a member of the Academy of Sciences should express so haughty a disdain for theories, and especially for the theory of political economy, so closely allied as it is to those of the exact sciences, with which he is so intimately acquainted, and of which he is so distinguished a Professor.

For, Gentlemen, the protective system has far more disastrous effects when applied to the products of the soil than when applied to the products of industry. The protective system when applied to industry has only one prejudicial effect, namely, to divert capital and national labour from natural objects of industry, and to drive them into artificial occupations in which both capital and labour are less productively employed.

This doubtless is a serious inconvenience, but it is limited to that amount of capital and labour which by means of protection is diverted from its natural channel. And this effect moreover is diminished by that internal competition which after a certain time brings the remuneration of capital and of the labour of the privileged branches of industry on a par with the profits and wages of those branches of industry which are not privileged.

But the protective system when applied to the cultivation of the soil has far more extensive and, I do not hesitate to say, far more disastrous effects.

In fact, Gentlemen, when by means of a protective duty you raise the price of the products of the soil, the price of wines and corn, for example, what follows? Two things occur: in the first place, certain lands which were not sufficiently fertile to produce corn and wine under the former conditions of the market, are brought under cultivation, or perhaps even the land has capital and labour bestowed upon it which would have been unremunerated but for the variation of the price. This first effect of the protective system applied to agriculture is analogous to that which I have already described, when it has manufacturing industry for its object: that is to say, there is a certain amount of capital and labour employed less productively than they would have been had things been left to their natural course.

This is a serious inconvenience, which, however, would not be of great moment, if the rise in the price of the products of the soil only affected the product of lands recently put into cultivation, or of additional capital and labour devoted to the improvement of lands which had been long since cleared.

But the factitious rise in prices extends to the products of all kinds of land, those of old as well as those of recent cultivation. Who profits by this rise? When it takes place it is shared between the proprietors and the farmers, especially if the latter hold long leases: after a certain time the entire profit is concentrated in the hands of the proprietors.

Thus, then, the protective system when applied to the products of the soil has the effect, on the one side, like the industrial protective system, of forcing capital and labour into a less productive channel; and, on the other, of increasing the rent of lands previously cultivated, at the expense of the consumers, which, eventu-

ally becomes a real tax borne by the consumers for the benefit of the proprietors.

But, Gentlemen, do not suppose that this is all. I shall quote the figures which have been supplied by the honourable gentlemen who have preceded me, in order to show the extent of this tax, and I shall apply them to wines. The honourable M. Lanza estimated the wine-produce of all the Sardinian States at 5,000,000 hectolitres; M. Menabrea has made it as much as 8,000,000. The estimate made by the honourable M. Menabrea is exaggerated, as I am about to show. We have no exact statistics of the produce of wines, but we have some facts upon which we might establish almost mathematical conclusions. In the city of Turin, for example, the use of wine is extremely general, and yet the consumption does not amount to two hectolitres per head. Then the average consumption of the whole country is much less than that of the capital. In many districts little or no wine is consumed, and there is none in which the use of wine is so habitual and general as in the city which contains the richest population of the country.

Therefore, Gentlemen, in calculating the average consumption at a little more than half of the consumption of Turin, namely, at one hectolitre per head, I think that we shall come very near the truth. Let us therefore take five millions of hectolitres as the average consumption of the country, and see what are the consequences of the protective duty. I suppose that the duty only increases the price of the hectolitre four francs.

The honourable M. Menabrea believes the increase to be more considerable than this. If it were so, my argument and my calculations would be the more striking. In proof of this, Gentlemen, let us suppose that the protective duty were suppressed. A portion of the vineyards would cease to be cultivated. The honourable M. Menabrea has calculated this reduction of cultivation at one-fifth. Although I consider this

an exaggerated conjecture, I will go so far as to admit it. The result will be that instead of producing five millions of hectolitres, the country would not produce more than four, which four millions of hectolitres will be sold four francs cheaper, making a saving of sixteen millions to the consumers who are forced to buy them.

But the honourable deputy Menabrea tells you, that this is a delusion : in our country the proprietors constitute the immense majority of the nation. The consumers form only a small minority scarcely worth mentioning. The honourable orator would be right, if the facts on which the arguments of the divisional councils of Chambéry are founded were correct, and could be extended to all the provinces of the state.

The Council tells us that Savoy contains 100,000 families of proprietors. Consequently, reckoning five individuals to a family, it would follow that in Savoy every body, or nearly five-sixths of the population were proprietors of vineyards. (*General laughter.*)

But M. Menabrea has spoken to you of the proprietors not only of Savoy, but of all the States.

He makes the number of families of proprietors amount to 650,000. I think this figure exaggerated, but agree to admit it. But he has not observed that there are many proprietors who do not possess an inch of vineyard.

Thus all the proprietors of the plains of Piedmont, the Novarese, the Ribiera of Genoa, and the greater part of the valleys of the Alps and Apennines possess fields and meadows, but not a single vine.

The number of proprietors of vineyards in the state does not amount probably to a higher figure than 100,000, and moreover among these proprietors of vines there is a great number who have no interest in seeing a rise in the price of wines ; such as those who only grow as much as is absolutely necessary for the consumption of their families.

The honourable M. Menabrea has stated that the average extent of vineyard possessed by each proprietor is 0·90 hectares.

MENABREA. I said 0·82 hectares in France.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. I think not. I do not think that property is as much divided in France as it is amongst us; but nevertheless let us take this figure. It is evident that the half, perhaps, of the proprietors of these lands only possess small plots, and grow only just as much as they require for their own consumption. Consequently these have no interest in the artificial increase in the price of wine.

I believe these arguments to be just, unexceptionable, and evident. Nevertheless, I am not sure that they will not be contemptuously rejected by my honourable opponents, if only for the sake of maintaining their point for a while. I think I have proved that duties which are protective of the products of the soil have the effect of inflicting a tax upon the consumers to the benefit of the growers, and especially, I will even say exclusively, to the benefit of the proprietors of the soil. This, Gentlemen, is a crying injustice, which it is impossible to justify in the sight of reason. Property, to be respected, must not enjoy any favours which are not the necessary and legitimate consequence of the economical arrangements of the country.

I should be sorry that any slight degree of severity in the language which I have just used with respect to property should cause me to be regarded by the honourable M. Menabrea and his political friends as a decided partizan of socialist opinions. On the contrary, I frankly declare that I have not the least sympathy with the anti-property doctrines of Proudhon and Co. (*Laughter.*) On the contrary, I have the greatest respect for property. (*General laughter.*)

MICHELINI. And with reason.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. I have the greatest respect

for property. I believe that property is the groundwork and the foundation of social order; but it is precisely because I wish to see the principle of property founded on a solid basis, and because I wish that it may be able to resist the attacks of Utopists and demagogues, that I wish it to rest upon the solid foundations of justice and equity, and not upon the quick sand of privileges and monopoly. (*Bravo!*)

But I shall be asked, and I think this identical objection was made by the honourable deputy for Acqui in the eloquent speech which he delivered at the commencement of this debate, why then do you not apply this principle to the other products of the soil, to bread-stuffs?

LOUARAZ. It was I who said that.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. I will meet that question by a very simple argument, which is, that an analogous reduction has already been made with respect to bread-stuffs.

LOUARAZ. And on cheese?

MINISTER OF FINANCE. I will also speak afterwards of cheese And the merit of this reduction is due to one of my honourable predecessors, Count Revel. It is he who has had the courage, for which I feel most sincerely obliged to him, to effect, at a time when the principles of free trade were not so much in favour as they are at present, a diminution of fifty per cent. upon the duties affecting bread-stuffs, which brought them down from six to three francs per quintal.

As this reduction was made almost contemporaneously with the abolition of the differential duties upon foreign bottoms it has produced still more striking results than those expressed by the above quoted figure.

The new duty fixed by the tariff of last year, 2. 50. the hectolitre, which only differs by a small fraction from that fixed by M. de Revel, is more moderate than the duty which we propose to you to lay upon the wines of France.

The average price of corn with us does not exceed 20 francs the hectolitre, the duty consequently is equivalent to 12, 50 per cent. The new duty on wines is equal to 18 or 20 per cent. according to the statement even of our opponents; you see therefore that even after the treaty wine will continue to be much more protected than corn, and thus we cannot be accused of inconsistency in confining ourselves for the time being to diminishing the duties on liquids without touching those which affect bread-stuffs.

I do not thereby mean to assert that these duties ought always to continue the same as they are at present. My opinion is quite otherwise—I think them too high.

And if I were sure of the support of the majority of the chamber,—and I am about to make a somewhat unministerial confession,—I should propose their diminution at once.

VALERIO. Propose it—propose it at once.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. Gentlemen, allusion has been made to cheese; the present duty on Gruyère cheese is fifteen francs the quintal (I beg the deputies of Savoy to correct me if I have made any mistake) The average price of cheese is 110 francs the quintal, the present duty consequently is equivalent to an ad valorem duty of 13 to 14 per cent.

Thus you see that the duty on cheese is lower than the new duty on wines will be; we have therefore not been inconsistent in not effecting a new reduction in the duties on cheese. I am not aware that there is any commodity constituting one of the chief necessaries of life which pays a higher duty than 20 per cent. Even sugar does not pay a higher duty. Why then shall we support an unjust privilege in favour of wines? I think that in what I have now said I have answered the question interposed by the honourable M. Louaraz.

LOUARAZ. And Swiss cheese?

MINISTER OF FINANCE. Swiss cheese pays a duty of 12 per cent. This duty is consequently less than that upon wines.

But the honourable member for Acqui said that the principle of free trade when applied to agriculture has a different effect to what it has when applied to manufactures, for that in rendering the proprietor unable to employ a great number of workmen, it caused a diminution in the rate of wages.

I think that is a mistake. And here I again beg pardon of M. Menabrea, but I must resort in some degree to theory.

The rate of wages, according to the undisputed principles of science, is regulated by the amount of capital allotted for the payment of wages, that is to say by the quantity of commodities of greatest necessity for the use of the labouring classes possessed by the nation compared with the number of labourers in search of employment. When you lower the price of articles of food you increase their abundance, and there will be a greater sum allotted for the payment of these workmen, consequently if the number of these workmen does not increase, the wages necessarily must increase.

M. Menabrea, by way of opposing these theories, has quoted the example of England. Well! It is principally to that country that I should go for examples to confirm by the results of experience the lessons of theory.

He has spoken of the reforms of Sir Robert Peel. These reforms may be considered as a real economical revolution, the boldness of which still astonishes even those who, like myself, have great faith in the precepts of science.

Well, let us see what effect these reforms have produced upon the working classes.

I will not speak of the workmen in manufactories: their condition is considerably ameliorated. This fact

was foreseen, and no one has thought of disputing it. I shall occupy myself only with agricultural labourers. Well, the last official statement of results shows that their wages reckoned in money have not diminished. And as, thanks to the abolition of protective duties, they can purchase for the same sum of money articles of food in much greater quantity than they could before, it follows that they are now in a much more favourable position. Moreover, since 1846, the year of that economical reform, the amount of poor's rates and the number of individuals dependent on public charity have continued to decrease annually, and this diminution, I am convinced, is very far from having reached its utmost limits.

You see then, Gentlemen, that theory here unites with experience to prove the advantages of free trade, applied to the products of the soil, and to re-assure as to its results those who are inclined to oppose it in the exclusive interest of the working classes.

The honourable M. Saracco calls my attention to the fact that the farmers, a very interesting class, are not in this condition; it is true, but I must say in reply that I consider them to be but slightly interested in the rise of price of articles of food, especially of wine. I am unable to speak with full information as to facts of the condition of the farmers in the province of Acqui.

But having some estates in a neighbouring province, that of Alba, exclusively cultivated by farmers, I am in possession of correct information with respect to them. I can therefore assert that generally speaking, what remains to them to sell from their wine crop, after paying the proprietor the portion which reverts to him and providing for the wants of their families and the labourers they employ, the wine constituting in the wine districts a part of the wages of the labourers, is very trifling indeed.

Moreover, I feel convinced that the farmers of the

province of Alba, and it must be the same with those of the province of Acqui, will suffer but a very slight loss, an almost imperceptible loss, in consequence of the reduction of the price of wine.

But it is time to leave theories and to pass to the practical question.

The principle of free trade being admitted, it was impossible to keep up the enormous protective duty affecting foreign wines. After having reduced nearly all the other duties from 10 to 20 per cent. how could we keep up a duty of from 50 to 75 per cent. on an article of primary necessity, such as wine?

I say a duty of from 50 to 75 per cent. I might even have said of 100 per cent., for if what the honourable M. Menabrea has said is true, if the wines of France are only worth 8 to 10 francs the hectolitre, the duty of 10 francs upon them is even higher than 100 per cent.

Gentlemen, the reduction of the duty was recommended not only by the necessity of making some compensation to France, but by the excessive nature of the duty considered in itself. If I had not been in the presence of a foreign negotiator, if we had not had to discuss with him the figures of the new duty, I do not know that I should have proposed to you so low a rate as 3 fr. 30, but certainly I should have gone as low as the rate of four fr. the hectolitre. Four francs or an ad valorem duty of 20 per cent. constitute the maximum of favour and protection that can without injustice be granted to wine: this article is still so limited, that it is our duty to put it within reach of every body.

I have said that wine is an article of primary necessity. On this point I find myself at issue with the divisional Council of Chambéry, which, after stating that Savoy contains 100,000 proprietors of vine-yards . . .

LOUARAZ. 100,000 vine-dressers.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. I beg Mr. Louaraz' pardon.

I will read the passage from the report to which I allude ; it is in the following terms “ In consequence of the immense subdivision of property in Savoy, there is reckoned to be about 100,000 families of proprietors, of whom a very large portion cultivate the vine.”

“ To these must be added the families of the wine-dressers who cultivate it as farmers [colons partiaires].”

LOUARAZ. In the 100,000 are included women and children.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. The report says 100,000 families of proprietors. Every one has read the report. It says 100,000 families of *proprietors, a very large portion of whom cultivate the vine.* To these must be added also *the families of the vine-dressers.* This is written on page 5 of the report.

Well, Gentlemen, in spite of the assertion to the contrary made by the divisional Council of Chambéry, I say that wine is an article of primary necessity. I think that consumed in reasonable quantities it is eminently serviceable to the health of the working classes, that it helps to support their strength, and that it aids them in undergoing extraordinary fatigues. I think it very desirable that the use of it should become more and more general, especially in those provinces where the pallid agriculturist cultivates rice and pasture lands.

I know that the honourable M. Saracco tells us, that if the labourers of these provinces do not drink wine the fault lies with the proprietors and the farmers. It is not my intention here to undertake the defence either of the farmers or the proprietors of this province ; it would be thought that I was defending my own cause. I shall confine myself to the remark that in these provinces the wages both of yearly and daily labourers is higher than in vine-growing countries. I have practised agriculture in both countries, and I have always paid the labourers in my rice grounds much higher wages than those in my vineyards.

Moreover it will be sufficient for me to quote one fact to prove the truth of my assertions, which is, that the labourers in the wine growing provinces emigrate en masse to work in the provinces where rice is cultivated. If the day's wages were not higher in these provinces they would not leave their homes. And observe that they do not only emigrate in the season of the rice-crop but in other seasons also; and at this very moment a great number of the individuals who are employed by us in sowing rice belong to the vine district of Montferrat.

One half of those who are engaged in reaping the corn are from the same province. The day's wages of a good labourer at the present time is 35 sous in the Vercellais, while in the hill country you may find as many as you will at 20 sous. If the consumption of wine is so limited in our plains, it is because it is already at too high a price on the spot where it is produced, which price is greatly enhanced by the expenses of carriage and the tradesman's profits.

The honourable gentleman, therefore, who preceded me was not justified in charging with exaggeration and false philanthropy the opening speech on this bill—on account of the statement that lowering the price of wines was a real question of humanity.

Yes, Gentlemen—it is a real question of humanity; for all those who are practically engaged in the agriculture of those provinces where rice is cultivated, and meadows require irrigation, will tell you that the number of fevers is much more considerable in those years in which the price of wine is high.

If the honourable deputy of Acqui will take information on this subject—if he will be so good as consult any medical man in the provinces of Piedmont, Lomellina or Vercelli, he will see that this fact is universally acknowledged.

I now come, Gentlemen, to the question of the effects of the treaty on the production of wines. Whatever be

my faith, as the honourable M. Menabrea has observed, in the principles of free trade if I had thought that in applying them I was effecting a complete and absolute revolution in the wine growing industry, I should have proceeded with much more slowness and moderation.

But, Gentlemen, I say frankly that I believe that the results of the treaty are exaggerated, and infinitely exaggerated, not so much perhaps as regards the price of wines, as regards the cultivation of the vine. I believe, Gentlemen, that the treaty will produce a diminution in the price of wine, and that it will exclude the wines of Piedmont from the greater part of the Genoese markets whither for some time past they had ceased to be brought in any great quantity, and from which sooner or later they must have been altogether excluded.

It remains to be seen, I speak now of Piedmont, whether the wines of France will be able to come into competition with them in the markets of the interior. I do not think they will. In ordinary years, when our vines are not struck by a scourge like that of last year, the price of drinkable and even good wine does not exceed 16f. the hectolitre; at that price we get very good wines, not luxurious wines, but wines of the year. In Montferrat there are but few wines which exceed that price.

Well, Gentlemen, even following the calculation of M. Menabrea you could only have the coarse wines of Languedoc at 16 francs. And I think, Gentlemen, that these wines can never be put in competition with ours. These wines are detestable to drink. Our consumers will never buy them at the same price as our own wines. But, said M. Menabrea just now, with these wines the blending is made. There is the great point of argument, the phantom, the spectre with which all the wine producers are frightened.

Gentlemen, let us have an explanation of what that blending is. It is the mixture of weak wines, of wines which have no colour, such as in France, the wines of

Surenne and the other environs of Paris, with coarse wines charged with spirit and sometimes with colour. Brandy is added to the mixture and that is what constitutes the blending. Sometimes even greater liberties are taken with it than this, and these wines have mixed up with them foreign ingredients, such as the blood of animals, colouring matters, &c.

Then, Gentlemen, with respect to Piedmont I do not know how it could be possible to manage the blending. Our cheapest wines are already too high coloured, which is especially the case with the wines of Acqui. I recollect very well that a wine merchant who was boasting of these wines to me, finished by exclaiming "There is a wine, Sir, it is so thick that you might cut it with a knife." (*Laughter.*)

It was a bold metaphor, if you will, but one which proves how highly coloured the wine of Acqui is. They will never blend those wines with the French wines; on the contrary, if ever the trade of blending became general amongst us, for our small wines of the plain, our own vines would furnish us largely with the means of carrying it on.

Lombardy does not produce coarse wines. Brianza which is the most extensive vine growing district in it, produces none but very thin and sour wines which require blending. That is one of the most powerful arguments of M. Menabrea. He told us: you will see the wines of Languedoc cross Piedmont and go into Lombardy to be blended. (*Laughter.*)

But at what price will these wines come into Lombardy? The carriage across Piedmont will be expensive. It will always be necessary to procure certificates of their origin, to have these wines stored in Piedmontese cellars. Then you know that however little you move wine and vin ordinaire you have to pay considerable expenses. The honourable M. Menabrea

reckons the price of these wines at 16 francs the hectolitre delivered at Genoa.

MENABREA. No, I calculated 18 francs to the frontiers of Lombardy.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. Well, say 18 francs to the frontiers of Lombardy. But, Gentlemen, the wines of Valence which are used for blending in Lombardy, generally cost much less, they do not fetch on the average more than 10 francs. I do not say this year. But in good seasons you have a hectolitre of very good wine for 10 or even 8 francs, and at Valence these wines are as fit for blending as those of Languedoc, for if they have less spirit in them they are thicker and more coloured, and at Milan it is colour that is liked.

Finally, one more fact will suffice to reassure you completely on the effects of this mysterious blending. At our door there lies a small country in which a tolerable quantity of wine is consumed, and which is in the same position as Lombardy, that is, it only produces small wines, weak both in spirit and colour; it is the Canton of Ticino which produces wines similar to those of Brianza, and like them require our wines to be blended with them. The wines of France can be imported there on the same conditions as our own; there is no need of using fraud for that purpose, nor any certificates of origin, and yet did you ever hear it said that the inhabitants of Ticino buy the wines of Languedoc to blend with the wines of Bellinzona and Lugano?

If that were so I should be very much astonished, for I have never heard of it.

Thus, Gentlemen, I think I have proved to you that as far as regards Piedmont, the growers may be certain that in ordinary years, not those of scarcity, they will remain masters of the market. I now come to Savoy which is the country which appears to interest itself most about the effects of the treaty now under discussion. The treaty, I do not deny, has caused a lively sensation in

Savoy, a sensation of which the extreme parties have cleverly taken advantage to excite a great agitation, a great movement against the government, and I will almost say against our liberal institutions.

VALERIO L. There is but one extreme party in Savoy.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. The deputies of Savoy, the journals which have made themselves the organs of the growers, have stated that the whole of Savoy was in arms against the treaty, that the whole of Savoy was interested in maintaining the protection of wines, and in fact if we trust to what the divisional Council has stated, it would be reasonable to believe it.

But matters are in a very different position. I cannot give you the exact statistics of the produce of wines in Savoy, because all the efforts made by the government, efforts made under the careful superintendence of M. Despine, have resulted only in a collection of documents bearing evidence of incorrectness.

I knew it a long time ago, and therefore I did not consult them.

When, however, the discussion of the treaty came on, I thought I would have recourse to this arsenal of figures, in the hope of finding in it some arms wherewith to support my thesis, but I was soon compelled to abandon it, as I could not knowingly avail myself of data which were radically false. To show you how incorrect this agricultural piece of statistics is, although made under the orders of government, but of a government which would not go to any expense, I will state to you, that on examining the figures relating to the different provinces of the state, I find for Maurienne a figure representing the cultivation of the vine which is much higher, even three or four times more than that which refers to the province of Upper Savoy. The latter is a province which cultivates the vine very extensively, while Maurienne does so but little; and yet

the government statistics give us 7441 hectares of vines in Maurienne and only 1720 in the province of Albertville. These figures show you how much confidence you can place in the statistics of which the honourable M. Menabrea has just made use.

According to them the number of vineyards in Maurienne would be seven times greater than in Upper Savoy ; but this result is completely false, and evidently absurd. Maurienne does not produce wine enough for the half of its inhabitants (a fact proved by the authorities), while Upper Savoy produces all the wine required by its inhabitants, and exports some little besides. I hope that M. Blanc will not wish to contradict these facts.

Let us now see in what proportion the different provinces of Savoy are interested in the cultivation of the vine.

Savoy consists of seven provinces, four of which form the division of Chambéry, and three that of Annecy. Now, Gentlemen, of the four provinces of the division of Chambéry, one only, namely, the province of Chambéry, produces any considerable excess of wines. With respect to the other provinces, their condition as to the growth of vines is as follows. Maurienne consists of 79 communes, 48 of which do not cultivate the vine, and only 31 cultivate it ; so that two-thirds of the province are strangers to its cultivation. Maurienne also is obliged to supply itself with wines from elsewhere ; and this importation, which is pretty considerable, is divided as follows. The districts of Lanslebourg and Modane furnish themselves with wines from Suse. Those of St. Michel and St. Jean draw them from Montmeillan, St. Pierre-d'-Albigny, and La Rochette. With respect to the Tarantaise, out of 55 communes, having a population of 46,000 souls, 25 communes, forming a mixed population of 17,000 souls, produce wine, but not sufficient for the consumption ; 30 communes, having a population of 28,440 souls,

produce no wine at all. With respect to Upper Savoy, the following is the information which I have received from the Intendant of that province, a man of great skill and integrity in his administration, and brother of one of our honourable colleagues, who, although he is one of my good friends, will vote, I fear, against the treaty. The honourable Intendant told me "the great mass of consumers consider that the treaty cannot but be beneficial to them, and many even of the proprietors of vineyards have but little apprehension of it." "In walking lately through the vineyards, I questioned an old man, who was resolutely engaged in cultivating his own vineyard; he told me that he did not fear competition with the wines of France, and that from the time that Savoy belonged to France, his wine had always had its value, &c. &c."

Thus you see, Gentlemen, that the feeling appears to be much stronger in the journals and amongst political men than it is amongst the cultivators and vine-dressers. I ought to add, that this opinion ought not to be regarded with suspicion because it was expressed by an employé. The Government has not attempted to use any influence over those who are dependent upon it.

The upright and candid character of the honourable person whose letter I have read, would suffice to protect him from all suspicion in this respect; but besides this, I can assure you that we have left every one free to express his own opinions. To prove this to you, I will state that the Intendant General of Chambéry came to my house in conjunction with the deputies present at Turin, to protest against the effects of the treaty, and that when he has been present at the meetings of the divisional council, he has made it no secret that he shared the opinions of the majority. Moreover, among the persons who have taken part in the deliberations of the said provisional council, there is an employé of the department of finance who has thrown great blame upon

the treaty : the ministry, however, so far from taking offence at his so doing, have complimented him upon his candour through one of his friends. I think myself therefore justified, after these facts, in asserting that the opinion expressed by the employés of the Government is sincere, that it is founded upon a conscientious conviction, and deserves entire confidence. I now come to the division of Annecy.

In the province of Annecy nearly two-thirds of the province do not produce wine, but as it is produced in very great quantities in the district of Seyssel, we may say that the production equals the consumption.

The importations from the provinces of Chambéry and Albertville are compensated by the exportations into Chablais, Faucigny, and the canton of Geneva.

But this is not the case with the two other provinces which compose the division. Both of them are far from producing the quantity of wine which they require.

As to Faucigny, on the most moderate calculations, the consumption amounts to 95,000 hectolitres. Some reckon it at 110,000, and some as much as 130,000 hectolitres.

Well, out of these 95,000 hectolitres, only 33,000 are produced in the province. The remainder comes from the other provinces of Savoy, and I freely confess that I have been not a little surprised to see the honourable M. Bastian uniting with the representatives of the other provinces of Savoy in opposition to this treaty. As a compensation, I have had the pleasure of knowing that his opinion was not shared by the great majority of the inhabitants of the province to which he belongs: I have had the consolation of seeing that other deputies of this country as well as deputies belonging to Savoy, had left their homes to come and protest against the claims in favour of a branch of industry which, though confined to certain localities, was represented as affecting the whole of Savoy.

Chablais is in a position nearly the same as that of Faucigny. I think, however, that the growth of wine is somewhat larger in proportion to the population, but this is all that I can state in this respect. I simply assert that this province is interested in the reduction of prices. From all that I have had the honour to state to you, it follows that out of seven provinces, only one, namely, Chambéry, produces wine above the requirements of its consumption. The others are entirely uninterested in the question, or have an interest opposed to that of the province of Savoy Proper.

The remark of the honourable opponents, MM. Despine and Menabrea, that it is to their interest that the price of wine should not be too high, does not move me at all.

But, Gentlemen, although the question reduces itself to a single province, that is no reason why I should not consider it as having a high importance.

If the province of Savoy Proper were the only one interested in the labour of wine-growing, I should not be the less blameable if I neglected its interests.

Let us then see, Gentlemen, if the effects of this treaty will be so injurious to this province as we are told it will be; if it is really threatened with total ruin in consequence of the competition of French wines.

The honourable M. Menabrea, with his habitual candour, has told us, I should not fear the effects of the treaty, if Savoy had only to fear the competition of the wines of Isère. He acknowledges then that this competition would not be fatal to them. I believe the honourable M. Menabrea has made this confession: he has said that the difference of price between these wines and those of Savoy is as three to five. I believe this figure exaggerated, for the honourable M. Brunier, who lives on the frontier, and has noted with care the price of wines for several years, estimates this difference at only a fifth.

But, after all, should the difference be such as is described by M. Menabrea, diminished as it will always be by the duty of 3f. 30 cent. it will not, as the honourable deputy himself knows, be such as to introduce any great disturbance in the cultivation of the vine.

But if the wines of Dauphiny do not alarm M. Menabrea, there remain those of the South to make him tremble for the future fate of Savoy. This fear appears to me to be chimerical. I will prove it by a very simple argument. If the wines of the South had such power, thanks to that terrible and mysterious operation of blending, if, in spite of the duty of 3.30 they could supplant the wines of Savoy in the markets of the country, how comes it that they have not before this caused the wines of Dauphiny, and those of the valley of Grésivaudan to disappear? These wines are much more exposed to the competition of the wines of Languedoc than those of Savoy will be; and yet I am not aware that the growth of them has ceased; on the contrary, if I am rightly informed, if what the honourable M. Brunier says is true, the cultivation of the wine makes greater progress every day in the valley of the Isère.

Be assured then, Gentlemen, that as long as the cultivation of the vine shall not have disappeared in neighbouring countries, it will not be near its dissolution under the blows of competition with the wines of the South.

This is not a scientific argument, it is a line of reasoning eminently practical and unanswerable, and one which will find favour in the eyes even of those who despise economical theories.

In my opinion the effects of the treaty on the wines of Savoy will in ordinary circumstances be confined to a mere trifle. Savoy produces constantly a great quantity of wine of passable quality at moderate prices. In such years, do not fear, the wines of France will enter

into no great competition with those of Savoy. The northern provinces, Chablais and Faucigny will purchase some wines of France; the other provinces will continue to drink the wines of the country; but Savoy, like all other wine-growing countries, is subject to the vicissitudes of the seasons. It often occurs that the vintage fails either in quantity, or as is more frequently the case, in quality. In the latter case France may be able to supply the deficiency of the production and compete profitably with the inferior wines made of grapes which have not reached their proper maturity. Would that be a great misfortune? The question, as it was so well put yesterday by the honourable M. Cadorna, reduces itself into a decision as to whether the consequences of a bad crop ought to fall on the consumers, or whether they ought to be borne by the producers; for my part I have no hesitation in declaring that I consider it both just and equitable that the producers who enjoy the profits of their property should endure the unfavourable chances to which from time to time it is subject.

And when bad weather affects their crop, they must content themselves with selling their produce at a lower rate; if it is of inferior quality, they must allow the consumer to substitute good foreign wine for the bad wine of the country.

Thus I think that it will be proper and useful for Savoy to manage so that in seasons when there are late vintages and the wines are sour and unwholesome, the consumers may be able to purchase good wines in France at reasonable prices.

The long arguments which I have unfolded before the House seem to me to have shown sufficiently how opportune and reasonable was the proposed reform in the duties on wines.

I am now going to speak to you of the compensation

which we have procured for agriculture, in freeing raw and thrown silks from all duty, both on their entry into France and their exportation from Piedmont.

And here let me be allowed to correct a singular mistake into which M. Menabrea has fallen. In speaking of the abolition of the duty on the exportation of silks, he has considered it as a gratuitous gift made to France, as a benefit to which the national growers must be strangers.

M. Menabrea might perhaps have been right, if Piedmont alone produced silk, and if consequently the price of silks were regulated only by the expense of production by us and the demand of French consumers.

But, Gentlemen, you know as well as I do that unfortunately it is not so.

Piedmont produces but a very small portion of the silks which are consumed, I do not say in the whole world, but even in the markets of France.

At Lyons, if I am not mistaken, they manufacture silk to the amount of more than 200,000,000 of francs per annum.

BLANC. They manufacture at Lyons to the amount of 150,000,000.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. Be it so: add to the consumption of Lyons that of St. Etienne and Nîmes, and you will reach the amount of 200,000,000. Now Piedmont sends to France hardly so much as the amount of 30 or 40,000,000, that is to say the fifth or at most the sixth part of the total consumption of silk.

It is not therefore the expenses of so small a portion of the produce sold in the markets which can influence prices: if these expenses are lowered, the prices remain the same, and it will be the grower alone who will profit by it.

You may be assured therefore that the abolition of the export and import duties will not cause any diminution of price in silks at Lyons, and that thus it will be the

Piedmontese growers who will gain all the difference of the duties.

That, Gentlemen, is a great advantage for you ; please to reflect well upon it, and you will become persuaded, like myself, that the article of silks is of such importance to agriculture that it ought of itself to disarm the opposition of the deputies of Savoy, and to decide them in voting for the treaty.

The production of silk constitutes the chief object of the industry of the country, as well as one of the most productive branches of our agriculture.

In freeing it from all duty and emancipating it altogether, we do a favour at the same time both to agriculture and industry.

Long enough and too long have we supported the system which protects agriculture. This system has produced the most melancholy effects in keeping this rich branch of industry in a long and disgraceful state of infancy.

That state of infancy is gone now that we have ceased to protect it, now that raw silks can be exported and the privileges of thrown silks have been first reduced and then abolished.

Since that time the silk growing industry has made great progress among us. Our mills, obliged to contend with equal arms with the stranger, now work not only the silks of Piedmont, but also those of Lombardy, Lower Italy and even of Sicily.

Thus, Gentlemen, the suppression of the export and import duties tends to favour that industry which is in the road of progress, not only because it relieves it from duties in themselves very heavy, but also because it frees it from numberless formalities with which the importation and re-exportation of foreign silks which come to be manufactured in Piedmont are surrounded.

The weakest fetters often do more injury to an industrial undertaking than the fiscal duties, as you may

judge by the following fact alone. Some years ago a capitalist established a very fine silk mill on the banks of the Lago Maggiore: well, the fiscal arrangements were such that this capitalist could not transport the silks which are grown in immense quantities on the other side of the lake without their being first sent to Turin to be verified, stamped, and submitted to the formality of a cautionary discharge before they were sent back to Intra. The business of the mill languished. The suppression of these vexatious prescriptions will assure its prosperity.

I am therefore convinced that the abolition of all duty both of import and export on silks will contribute to hasten that progressive movement which has for some years been manifested in the silk growing industry. For, Gentlemen, I am happy to state, that we have made great progress.

Gentlemen, vast establishments have been raised, which may bear comparison with the finest silk mills in France and England. Without fear of wounding any national feeling, I affirm that they have not abroad anything more perfect, for instance, than the mill of our colleague M. Bolmida, that of M. Rignon, of M. Bravo, and some others besides, which I refrain from mentioning.

If the manufacturers prosper, the agriculturists will also gain by it; for the more numerous and rich the former are, the better will they pay for the cocoons which the latter produce.

I therefore feel myself justified in repeating that agriculture, not less than industry, is interested in the reform that we are about to accomplish.

Messrs. Louaraz and Bastian, as well as the Deputy of Acqui, without disputing the facts, charge me with wishing to substitute everywhere, even up to the summit of the Alps and Apennines, the cultivation of the mulberry for that of the vine.

Gentlemen, I do not push matters to absurdity ; I have not said that we must substitute everywhere the mulberry for the vine. I have not advanced this absurd proposition ; in the first place, because I do not think the country can dispense with growing the wines of the country, and next, because I know that all the lands in which the vine is cultivated are not fit for the mulberry.

But what I do think is this, that there are a great number of places where such a substitution would operate favourably for the proprietors. I do not speak of the vines on the beautiful slopes in the provinces of Asti, Montferrat, Alba, and Mondovì. I do not allude to those planted at great expense on the slopes of the mountains, but I wish to speak of a multitude of vines cultivated in the plains, or low spots, where a detestable wine is produced at enormous expense. In the plain of Alexandria, for instance, and in Fraschea, they have to bury their vines every year. Every year in the month of November they bury their vines, to dig them out in the month of April. This barbarous practice could not continue if the wine had not a factitious price. Thanks to the protective duty, when it shall be abolished the proprietors of Fraschea will renounce their old system : they will no longer disinter their vines, but plant in their place mulberries, which will prosper admirably. Every body will gain by it ; the consumers, who will drink better wines, and the producers, who will sell their fine silks at better prices than the detestable beverage which they honour with the name of wine.

This is no dream ; this transformation has been effected in some provinces. It has been effected in the province of Coni, thanks to the energy of some enlightened proprietors, who have shown an example to their fellow-citizens.

At Coni, the mulberry has been substituted for the

vine. The production of wine at Coni has diminished, while that of silk has prodigiously increased. It has nearly trebled itself in twenty years. The same thing might take place in the province which the honourable M. Saracco represents. They will not plant the mulberry on high hills, but *in the bottom of the valley*, and half way up the hill side they may plant it; and the proprietors who do so will have the advantage over those in the plain of seeing the training of silk worms succeed in a more certain manner. For every one knows how much these worms thrive in a country where the air is fresh, as in hill-countries.

I persist, then, in saying that the substitution of the mulberry for the vine may be effected with great advantage; not everywhere, but in a great number of localities; and that if it were effected only in some of these localities, the balance would be re-established between the production and the consumption, in spite of the importations to which the treaty will give rise.

Gentlemen, at the close of yesterday's sitting, I drew your attention to the effects that the suppression of the export and import duties on silk must produce on our industry. I pointed out to you the benefits which must result to Piedmont; I must now speak to you of the results which Savoy in particular may and ought to expect from it.

You know, Gentlemen, that the silk trade in Savoy is yet in its infancy; the number of mulberries compared to what the soil is capable of producing is still very limited. I beg Mr. Louaraz' pardon for not placing absolute faith in his words when he advanced the statement that there was not a plot of land where the mulberry could grow which was not planted with it. I am not acquainted with the locality of which he spoke, but I am acquainted with the plain of Chambéry, and I can assure you that in that plain there is still room for thousands of mulberries. I will moreover quote to you a

fact which will support what I advance; one of our colleagues who has left home to come here to support the treaty was engaged in planting mulberry trees.

BRUNIER. Yes, it is I. I have planted vineyards also.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. You see then, Gentlemen, that Savoy may still increase and considerably increase the production of silk worms. One of the causes which in past times has opposed the developement of the cultivation of mulberry trees—and I hasten to say that great progress has been made since the period to which I allude—was the small number of *filatures* which existed in Savoy, and the total absence of silk mills. The number of *filatures* was small, because generally speaking the number of cocoons produced was not great, and in the second place, because the part of Savoy which produces the most silk is that which skirts the frontier of France.

Now the present customs' laws impose the most vexatious restrictions on the *filatures* within a circle of five miles of the extreme frontier; they may not be established without the special permission of the minister of finance, they are subject to the visits of the custom-house agents, and they cannot export silks without receiving a permit from the custom house office. These measures, Gentlemen, I say it boldly, are excessively vexatious. In practice they are not carried out in a very severe manner. Since I entered the ministry I have recommended the finance agents to show the greatest indulgence; nevertheless the existing law comprises a great abundance of vexatious arrangements which may at any moment be carried out to the infinite annoyance of the proprietors of throwing mills.

To enable the chamber to form a judgment upon the truth of my assertion, I shall trouble them by reading the rules now in force. (*He reads the law on Customs' duties.*)

. . . . Finally a crowd of other formalities. How can

you expect that any branch of industry can be developed and flourish when encumbered by so many fetters ?

When the exportation of silk shall be free, these formalities will disappear, and the silk trade when it finds itself delivered from these wearisome and vexatious formalities will be able to develop itself rapidly as it has done in Piedmont. Gentlemen, not only do I hope that the number of *filatures* will increase in Savoy, but I also hope that Savoy, which, as the honourable deputy Menabrea said yesterday, possesses great elements of industrial prosperity, will see silk mills established in her territory. The mills require great motive power, and this is possessed by Savoy in abundance. It produces a quantity of silk sufficient for the supply of a mill, and if it were deficient in this respect, as the exportation of silks from France is declared free, it will be able easily to purchase them in the neighbouring departments.

I ought to state that I have already heard many of our manufacturers express their intention of buying French silks in order to work them in their mills. This might be done as well in Savoy where motive power is more abundant and cheaper. I hope that the family of the honourable deputy Blanc which has already rendered such great services in introducing the manufacture of silk stuffs, will complete their work by establishing a mill for throwing the silks employed in their manufacture.

BLANC. Savoy must produce silks . . .

BRUNIER. She will produce them.

BLANC. . . . In 20 years from this time.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. But, Gentlemen, the abolition of the export and import duty on silks ought to have quite a different influence on the manufacturing industry of Savoy. Lyons is the principal centre of the manufacture of silk tissues, but at Lyons there is every day going on an industrial revolution. The manufac-

turers extend their factories beyond the walls of the city, and strive to substitute for town workmen, workmen from the country, who work at a lower rate.

The Lyons' looms have extended themselves into the departments of the Ain, and the Isère, and reached the extreme frontier; at the French Pont-de-Beauvoisin there are several looms working on account of the manufacturers of Lyons. When the day comes that there shall be no more import nor export duties on silks, the manufacturers of Lyons will be able to manufacture silk not only in the departments of the Ain and Isère, but also in Savoy, and they will do it, for the Savoyard workman is intelligent, he is economical, and can with advantage enter into competition with the French workman. In suppressing import duties . . . (*Interruptions.*)

BLANC. Cause the import duty on stuffs to be suppressed in France.

PRESIDENT. I beg that Gentlemen will not put questions or interrupt the speaker.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. I confess that I like interruptions—I do not complain of them. (*Laughter.*)

M. Blanc says to me, But there are very high duties in France on silk tissues, the same has been already said yesterday, I think it was by the honourable M. Menabrea. I shall reply to what he has said with respect to the gauzes of Chambéry. As to the duties, they could only be an obstacle to the extension of the manufactures of Lyons in Savoy so long as Lyons confined its manufactures to the internal consumption of France. In that case it is evident that the manufacturers would not weave for exportation stuffs which would have to pay a high duty.

But we know that the half, nay too thirds of the manufactures of Lyons are intended for exportation; that is true, especially of the plain stuffs. This being the case they will have them manufactured in Savoy, and then sent free of expense to the entrepôt of Lyons,

whence they will be exported to America. This extension of the Lyons manufactures is very probable, because, I repeat, the Savoyard workman is intelligent, economical, and can stand the competition with the foreign workman. I am going to show that he possesses these qualities by facts which the House will doubtless listen to with pleasure.

You will see by what has just occurred in Faucigny, to how great a degree Savoy is susceptible of becoming a manufacturing country: with what facility those branches of industry which are left to themselves, and which claim no protection, are able to develop themselves in that country.

The trade of clockmaking had existed for a long time in Faucigny, but it had become neglected; the government never took any interest in it, and the competition of Switzerland had almost annihilated it. In 1847, M. Desambrois, a minister who paid attention to manufactures, and had the interests of Savoy at heart, founded a school for clock making at Cluses; the government protected the introduction of the unwrought materials by freeing them from all duties; but it granted no premiums, and did not shelter this branch of industry by the protective system. And now see what has taken place at Cluses and in the environs in five years.

In 1847 there were 607 journeymen clock makers whose wages amounted to 295,000 francs. Last year, at the close of 1851, the number of workmen amounted to 1125, and the amount of salaries which they received in the course of the year to 945,000 francs. You see, Gentlemen, what immense progress a branch of industry, not protected at all by the government in any special manner, and for which it has only expended a few thousand francs, has made. This branch of industry will not stop there, it will extend still more. Last year a watch manufactory was established at Cluses, and shortly another will have to be established. Manufac-

tures cause a demand for manufactures. So that in a few years I do not doubt that Cluses and its environs will be able to rival Switzerland, and attain the same degree of prosperity as is enjoyed by the Chaux de Fond.

Since I have spoken of the industrial and commercial relations of Savoy with France, I ought for a moment to retrace my steps in order to reply to one of the objections which has been repeated by nearly all the speakers who have opposed the treaty. Nearly all have said that France will sell us its wines, and that as we have nothing to give it in exchange it will carry off all the money in Savoy.

This objection would be easily met if I wished to have recourse to theoretical illustrations, but I abstain from so doing that I may not take advantage of the patience of the honourable M. Menabrea, and also because this side of the question has been treated by my friend, not in politics but in economy, the honourable deputy Michelini. However, I think it my duty to reassure the House upon what the honourable M. Menabrea and some of his colleagues have said with respect to the economical condition of Savoy. These honourable deputies assure us that Savoy is drained of its money, and that the least exportation of specie would plunge it into the greatest distress. For the proof of this fact they rest upon statistical documents. It has been said, not, it is true, in this place, but in the deliberations of the divisional council of Chambéry, that taxes could not be collected in Savoy without the greatest difficulty.

Well, Gentlemen, these statements are singularly exaggerated. I will prove this to you by making you acquainted with the state of the receipts from the land tax on the 1st of March last.

Look at the result of this document. On the 1st of March, 1852, there remained due upon the land tax of 1851, which for the seven provinces composing Savoy amounts to 1,017,173 fr. the sum of 77,324, fr.

which is 7 per cent. Then, Gentlemen, for all the continental provinces the land tax of which is 11,775,443 fr., there remained due at the same period 935,906 fr., that is to say, nearly 8 per cent.

These facts prove that the provinces of Savoy are as regards the land tax less in arrear than the other provinces of the state.

It has further been stated that the new duties had drained Savoy, and had carried away all its specie.

LOUARAZ. That has not been said.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. It has been so stated many times in the journals. Here is a fact which I think very useful to show to the House how erroneous this assertion is; it is the actual state of the treasury accounts. Upon the calculation made by the inspection of the treasury, it appears that the central office has received in 1851 from Savoy the sum of about 226,000 francs, while there has been paid from the same for Savoy the sum of 230,000 francs, which makes a difference of 4000 francs in favour of Savoy.

But here is another fact, which may explain the complaints of certain provinces of Savoy; it is that the office of Chambéry has disbursed to the other offices of Savoy 117,000 francs, and has received 1,315,000 francs. Thus the office of Chambéry has received 1,230,000 francs more than it has paid out. This is natural, because Chambéry is the centre of government, the seat of the magistrate of appeal, and at this moment is the province in which the greatest number of public works is carried on.

But that shows you that it is perhaps the only province of Savoy which has not the right to complain of the new duties, since they have brought it more money than it has had to pay; that is a fact which I reserved to quote to you in order to satisfy you, to a certain degree upon the statements which have been made to you.

The honourable M. Menabrea, in order to prove the

distress of Savoy, dwells upon the number of judicial sales

In fact, having verified the figures, I found the calculations were correct. But there is one observation which the honourable M. Menabrea has not made, which is, that if the judicial sales are more considerable in Savoy than in the other provinces of the state, it is the same with sales which are not judicial. A much greater transfer of property takes place in Savoy—property oftener changes hands—this being the case, it is quite natural that if there are many voluntary sales, there should also be many judicial sales. You know that in a country where the *bandes noires* (speculators in land) carry on extensive operations and sell on credit, as in Savoy, it will happen that a great number of buyers do not pay, which forces the sellers to dispossess them.

If the honourable M. Menabrea had compared the judicial sales with those which are not judicial, he would have seen that the proposition was rather to the advantage of Savoy than of the other provinces of the state, as I will prove by figures.

In the division of Chambéry (I beg to observe that the table which I have before me is drawn up by divisions), in the division of Chambéry, there were, in 1830, 7529 sales not judicial, and 171 judicial sales, which is equivalent to 22 judicial sales in 1000. In the province of Annecy there were more judicial sales than in Chambéry, there were 33 per cent. In the province of Turin the proportion is more favourable, namely, 19 per cent. But in the province of Coni, where property is more divided than in the province of Turin, the judicial sales are to the non-judicial sales as 40 to 1000. Thus you see that in the province of Coni there are twice as many judicial sales as in the province of Chambéry. I hope that this will encourage M. Menabrea a little. Gentlemen, I think I have proved to you that the principal conditions of the treaty, namely, the

reduction of the duties upon the importation of wines into France, and the suppression of those on silks, are extremely useful and advantageous measures. At the same time an objection has been made which is not without weight. It has been made to me in public, and more often in private, by persons who are otherwise favourable to the treaty. The principle of reduction is admitted—the principle of free trade is admitted—it is even admitted that the reduction should be carried to the extent to which the ministry has consented to carry it—only we are reproached with not having proceeded by degrees, and little by little. They would have wished the reduction not to have been completed till after many years. Well, Gentlemen, I declare to you that if I find any advantage in the treaty at all, it is precisely because the reduction is effected immediately, radically, and without delay; it is because the protectionists are not lured on, but are at once made acquainted with the terms to which they must definitively submit.

With respect to reforms, I think they ought to be matured slowly, that we ought to reflect upon them well; but once that it has been determined to make them, they must be made with resolution and boldness, and promptly executed; this is the system which I have seen followed in England.

Sir Robert Peel has accomplished quite a different reform from ours; there existed in England an enormous duty on corn: from this ultra protectionist system he passed to a system of liberty the most absolute.

But, Gentlemen, beyond these general considerations three special considerations have led the Ministry to urge the reduction of the import duty on wine without delay. Permit me to state to you what these considerations are.

The first is the deplorable results of the last crop. We have been, Gentlemen, reduced to a real dearth of wines. This dearth rendered it necessary to apply a

remedy, and that a prompt one. So true is this, Gentlemen, that if the negotiations of the treaty had not been entered upon, I should have taken upon myself, during the absence of the House, to reduce the import duties on wine to the rate stipulated by the treaty, if not lower. I have been solicited to do so by the Chamber of Commerce of Genoa and other interests which are seriously compromised by the high price of wines.

There was a dearth ; that dearth was not a passing one ; it is evident that it must last the whole year ; it is probable even that it will be extended through the year 1853.

I hope that the predictions made by the honourable M. Zirio on this subject will not prove entirely correct ; I hope that that terrible disease will not devour the vine this year as it did last year, but in no case can we hope for a very good crop. The prices throughout the next year consequently will be high.

Now, Gentlemen, what opportunity more favourable for effecting a diminution in the customs' duties on a highly protected production, than when, through facts doubtless independent of the will of man, the price is extremely high ? It is evident that no more suitable opportunity could be chosen for effecting the reform. A second cause of greater importance, in my opinion, made the Government decide without hesitation on reducing the import duty on wines, namely, the necessity of reforming the system of the " gabelle accensate," or excise duties, and to extend them to all the provinces of the State.

In the name of the principle of justice and equity, the Government and the House wish to extend to provinces which do not produce wines, the duty on the sales of this liquid. How could we do so with justice, if we maintained a protective duty on the wines needed by these provinces ? What should we say to the deputies of Liguria, when we came to propose to them the

establishment of imposts in their provinces in the name of equity, if they were to reply to us, " Before imposing upon us a new tax, first relieve us from that which, thanks to the protective duty on wines, you make us pay for the benefit of the growers in the wine districts. If we must bear the same public burthens, put us in the same condition with reference to one of the commodities the consumption of which is the most extensive."

If the Deputy Bonavera or one of his colleagues had made this objection before I had laid the treaty before you, I should really not have known what to answer him.

The honourable deputy of Acqui, foreseeing this objection, addressed the Ministry and with amiable irony said to it, Since you wish to relieve the poor, why are you about to extend the *gabelle accensate* to all the provinces of the States. But the honourable deputy of Acqui has been unjust with respect to me. Perhaps he has not read the project of law relative to the re-organization of the *gabelle*, for he would have there seen that the Government proposes an enormous reduction of from 5f. to 1f. 50c. the hectolitre on wines for private consumption. This is an enormous reduction, which reduces the duties to a point at which they will not produce any sensible effect on the price of wines. If I have thought it right to preserve a duty of some kind on this sort of sales, it is for the sake of keeping a means of preventing fraud.

Thus, Gentlemen, if you wish to reform the *gabelle accensate*, if you wish to put a stop to the injustice reasonably complained of by the provinces of Piedmont, you must precede that reform by a diminution of the protective duty which presses on wines ; you must establish a rule for wines analogous to that which exists for all the other products either of the soil or of manufacture.

Finally, Gentlemen, the third consideration of which

I spoke to you, is that of the condition of the county of Nice. You decided last session that on the 1st of January, 1854, that is to say, in eighteen or nineteen months, the system of customs which is established for the whole State should be extended to the county of Nice.

I recollect that in this case I formally declared in the name of the Ministry and in my own name that I would never consent to the establishment of the present system of customs in the county of Nice, unless the duty on wines were first reduced. It would seem to me a monstrous thing to make the county of Nice, which produces but very little wine, pay a duty of 75 to 100 per cent. on what it is compelled to purchase in France.

Thus, Gentlemen, if we wished the diminution of duty to take place before the extension of the system of customs to the county of Nice, it was necessary to carry it out this year or the next.

Now, as present circumstances appeared to me eminently favourable for making this reduction this year, not knowing moreover what might happen in the next year, I have thought it right to lose no time, but to hasten the question.

Allow me yet a last consideration, and I have finished the economical portion of my speech. The Ministry is in the hard necessity of proposing to you the establishment of new taxes. Now it does not think that the country can bear these new burdens, unless the economical system of the country be also reformed, unless the consumers, who, without offence to M. Menabrea, form the immense majority, be compensated—I say, compensated—for the sacrifices which the present system imposes upon them in favour of the growers. Yesterday I showed you by figures that on a very moderate calculation the present duty on wine occasions the consumers a sacrifice of nearly 12,000,000 fr. in favour of

the proprietors. This, Gentlemen, is about as much as the Government thinks necessary to establish the equilibrium in the finances.

Gentlemen, the body social is affected with a financial disorder. If the disorder were slight, it might be treated with gentle means, with homœopathic remedies, but as the disorder is serious, in order to cure it we must have the courage to resort to operations which may occasion momentary suffering, but which must in the end bring about a restoration of health, and turn even to the advantage of the members which we shall have been obliged to sacrifice to the health of the whole body.

Gentlemen, I think I have justified the passive parts of the treaty, namely that which is called the concessions made to France. I have not much to say upon the active part; namely, what we have obtained from that nation. The subject has been already treated on by several of those who have spoken before me, if necessary it will be again spoken upon by others and particularly by the honourable reporter, that worthy interpreter of the oil-bearing districts.

I shall say but few words on this subject. The honourable M. Menabrea himself, with perfect candour and fairness, has produced figures which I am far from disputing; therefore on this score we perfectly agree. It is only objected that we have not obtained enough: I acknowledge this also. I think that we ought to have obtained more; if I had been in the place of the French Government, I should have conceded more even out of consideration for the interests of France. It is possible that if the Sardinian negotiator had managed better, he would have obtained more. One thing I can assure the House, that our not having obtained more is not for want of effort, perseverance and patience on our part; the negotiations were commenced in the month of October, and they have lasted four months

without interruption ; and observe, Gentlemen, that a feeling of justice towards one of our honourable colleagues, M. Avigdor, compels me to say that he had already prepared the ground, last summer, during his stay in Paris.

The negotiations appeared at first, easy, but as soon as they came to draw up the articles, it was necessary to communicate with the administration of the French Customs as was reasonable. Then began difficulties without number, which several times nearly caused the miscarriage of the negotiations, to such an extent that, without the direct intervention of the Chief of the State, it is probable that they would not have come to any result, for all the upper employés of the government have done all they could to prevent the adoption of the treaty.

You see, Gentlemen, that I have not too many reasons to compliment the French Customs. Yet I think it my duty to clear them from the reproach thrown upon them by M. Menabrea, and to show that they are not such protectionists as some would make them appear.

We are told : while you grant free trade to France, France maintains almost prohibitive protective duties upon all your products.

This reproach is founded upon an error. Our products pay, it is true, high duties on entering France, duties which I should like to see reduced, but which are not prohibitive, but on the contrary are not higher than the duty which we propose to you to maintain upon wine.

Our principal products which we export into France are silks, oils, cattle and cheese.

VALERIO. Rice.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. And rice.

Well, Gentlemen, as to rice just mentioned, it pays a duty of three francs the hundred kilogrammes. Rice fetches, I think, 36 francs the quintal ; when it reaches the frontier of France, it fetches at least 40. It is therefore a duty of 8 per cent. which is lower than that to

which we subject foreign bread stuffs. As to oils, the new duties will not go so high as 15 per cent. But as I am speaking of duties on oils, I must beg leave to reproach the honourable M. Bonavera for having opposed last year the diminution of the duty with us to below 20 francs ; the result of which is that it is now higher with us than with our neighbours. (*Laughter.*) Thus, every time that the French plenipotentiary spoke to me about oils, he never failed to say to me, You boast of being a free trader, and you are a greater protectionist than we.

The honourable M. Bonavera ought not to have exposed me to this cutting sarcasm. (*Laughter.*)

If he had consented that a more considerable reduction should have been made upon oils last year, perhaps I should have had a better game to play with my honourable opponents.

BONAVERA. I had accepted the reduction for fine oils, I only opposed it with respect to the oils for manufactures, on which there is only a protective duty of 5 or 6 per cent.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. Let us come to the cattle. The honourable M. Menabrea says that the duty paid on cattle on its entry into France is a prohibitive duty. I do not think so. The treaties have substituted the duty by weight for the duty per head ; only they have fixed a maximum of 40 francs for oxen and 20 francs for cows.

Now, Gentlemen, these beautiful cows in Savoy are certainly worth more than 200 francs : with us in Piedmont they would fetch from 250 to 400 francs. These cows would fetch at the most in France, 200 francs per head, which is at a duty of 10 per cent. Now, how can we, who keep up a duty of from 16 to 20 per cent on the importation of French wines, maintain that the pretensions of France are exorbitant, when it retains a duty on cattle which is often lower than 10 per cent, and which rate it cannot exceed ?

In my opinion, France ought to have lowered still more the duty on our cattle, for that would have been a measure eminently advantageous to the labouring classes. I have endeavoured to obtain it, but my arguments were founded more upon considerations of humanity and health, than on considerations of justice; for I repeat it, I was not well able to give an answer; the duty that we maintained on wines was greater than that which they maintained in France on cattle.

The honourable M. Menabrea, in the last place, has reproached me with having forgotten the gauzes of Chambéry which pay on their entry into France, a really exorbitant duty. I must here make a confession. I have not spoken of it at all. I hope however that my honourable opponents will not refuse me absolution when they know the motives which have induced me not to press for a concession which I considered as perfectly illusory. In order to justify myself I must beg you to allow me to tell you a short anecdote.

Last year we had obtained a reduction of 12 per cent. on the gauzes of Chambéry, a reduction which has been shown with great clearness by an honourable deputy to be of no value, as it left a duty remaining which was far higher than the premium which is paid to the smugglers.

I have felt remorse at having done so little for a branch of industry which appeared to me to deserve the greatest interest. Not knowing how to remedy this, I begged M. Martin, who is at the head of the gauze manufactures, and whose recent loss we lament, to send some gauze dresses to one of my friends in London, a man of very good position in the world, in order to get them into the fashion. M. Martin followed my advice.

My friend took a great deal of pains: he succeeded in making these dresses figure at Almack's, and in getting them cried up by the leading fashionables of the season. So, after some time, he wrote to tell me that

the first consignment was sold, and desired M. Martin to send to London a hundred pieces of his best manufacture. I sent this order to M. Martin with an air of triumph, but what was my surprise and disappointment when I heard him tell me that it was impossible to execute it ; for his manufactory was too limited to enable him to do it.

When I urged him, he entered into great details as to the means employed by him in producing his gauzes, and he showed me clearly that the manufacture of these stuffs required especial conditions which made it impossible to exceed certain limits, and therefore it was useless to open a new outlet for gauzes, for he should be unable to take advantage of it. And so true is this, that M. Martin who had an idea of sending some gauzes to the Exhibition in London, refrained from doing so, because, as he told me, he would be unable to satisfy the demands to which his so doing would certainly give rise. This is the reason why I have not insisted upon the article of gauze.

I will here close what I shall call the economical portion of my speech. But there is yet another portion which you will permit me to treat upon, namely the special question of Savoy, a question which I will frankly state is much more political than economical.

If my duty were limited to what has been said in this House, I should willingly abstain from this delicate and painful part of my task, for I acknowledge with pleasure that the honourable deputies of Savoy who have opposed the treaty, have done so with the greatest moderation and propriety in seeking carefully to avoid every thing that could give rise to irritation or passion in the debate. But, Gentlemen, you know that in speaking to this House, we also speak to the Country, and that it is often the only means which a ministry has to justify itself in the eyes of the country against the accusations of all sorts brought against it by hostile parties.

I think myself obliged therefore to treat of the political question in so far as it concerns Savoy. As I have had the honour of telling you, when on the very day fixed for the discussion of the treaty, I saw all the deputies of Savoy who were in Turin present themselves before the ministry with the exception of one only; when those deputies spoke to me of the public spirit in Savoy; when they told me that opinions were unanimous to reject my proposition, that extreme parties had ceased from their political struggles in order to turn their united efforts against the government, when they observed to me that all the journals, even the most opposite in politics, came to an understanding with each other for the first time, and opposed with equal ardour the treaty with France—I deeply felt, I confess, the responsibility of my situation.

As it was well said yesterday by the honourable M. Lanza, in his remarkable speech, Savoy is in so serious a position, as to deserve to be taken into the special consideration of the government—so that it would have been a very imprudent as well as a very impolitic thing, to propose under existing circumstances a measure, which although good in itself, and useful as regards the general interest, might have been injurious to this part of the kingdom.

Therefore it was that I felt deeply my responsibility, and it has required all the faith with which the doctrines of free trade inspire me, to resist the pressing applications of the honourable deputies of Savoy. This feeling, however soon subsided. The information that I have received—the facts which I have been able to verify—have proved to me that in Savoy the opinion was very far from unanimous, and that if there were many persons, and those very respectable and very honourable, who were opposed to the treaty, there were also other very respectable and honourable persons who approved it, and gave it their full and entire approba-

tion. Moreover the arrival in Turin of three honourable members of the house has happened so as to confirm these facts in a striking manner.

There remained the assent of the journals. I confess to you that I could not understand why all on a sudden the *Patriote Savoisien* came to agree with the *Courrier des Alpes*, and the *Echo du Mont Blanc*—why the *Patriote Savoisien* which had supported the principles of free trade and had demanded the immediate and radical application of them, should suddenly become protectionist. In this fact I saw an important sign. I asked myself if it were not possible that the cultivation of the vine in Savoy had something special in it to justify an exemption from general principles.

My doubts however soon disappeared, thanks to the explanations which a very honourable person who arrived from Chambéry has been so good as to give me. On asking him the explanation of the riddle which puzzled me, he replied that the editorship of the *Patriote* was changed, that the new editors were quite as *patriotic*—quite as democratic, if you will—as their predecessors, but at the same time they were proprietors of vines. (*Loud laughter.*)

MICHELINI. There lies the secret.

MINISTER OF FINANCE. The answer appeared to me to be conclusive, and I asked no further explanations.

As to the other journals, as to the *Courrier des Alpes* and the *Echo du Mont Blanc*, their opposition did not appear to me extraordinary. The war which they carry on against the ministry does not date, Gentlemen, from the publication of the treaty—it has a much older origin—it dates from the day when the ministry presented to parliament the law on the ecclesiastical court—the Siccardi law. This opposition has increased in proportion as these journals became convinced that the ministry were resolved to proceed freely on in a liberal course.

It reached at length the extreme limits of violence, it became furious when, after the 2nd of December, those journals saw that the impious hopes which the events in France had led them to entertain, were, thanks to the union of the ministry and the parliament, not realized. Since then they have ceased to discuss and to reason

A VOICE. They have never reasoned

MINISTER OF FINANCE in order to confine themselves to insulting, defaming, and calumniating the ministry, and the chambers, and our liberal institutions themselves. I will only quote one single fact in support of this assertion, and if I do quote it, it is because it concerns me but indirectly, it is the fabulous story of the sixty millions abstracted from the public treasury. (*Expression of interest.*) The chamber recollects that in one of the last meetings of the last session the honourable Count de Revel in speaking

REVEL. I claim permission to speak.

MINISTER OF FINANCE . . . of the past, said that during his ministry at the close of 1848, he had procured for the treasury the sum of 60 millions by extraordinary means, and worthy, in my opinion, as far as I have had the opportunity of learning, of the greatest praise.

A short time after the honourable Count stated that in the month of March following, these 60 millions existed no longer. Since then the re-actionary journals of Turin and those of Savoy, began to invent a story affirming that these 60 millions had been mis-appropriated by the Minister of Finance, and had been used for any purpose but that of defraying the expenses of the State. The honourable Count de Revel with his habitual integrity addressed a letter to a journal to explain the fact. The journals of Savoy took no notice of it, they continued in fine style to claim their 60,000,000. I do not know if it was to-day—but yesterday there was an article in the *Echo du Mont-Blanc* to demand

in a threatening tone an account of the 60 millions. There is such evident dishonesty in this, that it would raise a smile of pity, were it not that many persons ignorant of financial economy might end by believing that there was some truth in a calumny repeated for such a length of time.

It is true that 60 millions of extraordinary resources have been poured into the coffers of the treasury, but I think that it is easy to explain how they have been expended, when the extraordinary expenses incurred at that period are taken into consideration. You remember the enormous number of soldiers that we had then under arms, and the expenses of all kinds then undertaken. You will therefore find it quite natural that in 7 months 60 millions more than usual had been expended. With respect to the accounts which the journals demand of the Minister of Finance, he can do nothing else than submit to Parliament the law of the accounts (spogli) of the expenditure of 1848 and 1849. This duty he has fulfilled. In these accounts the application of these 60 millions is justified to the last centime.

A journal of Savoy has asked me for a copy of the said accounts. I immediately sent one, and if the *Echo du Mont-Blanc*, and the *Courrier des Alpes* also wish a copy I am quite disposed to make them a present of one. (*Laughter.*)

As the honourable Count de Revel has claimed permission to speak, I am sure that he will not hesitate to give in the face of the whole nation, the most formal contradiction to the absurd calumny with which I have too long engaged your attention. As I have already said, I have only spoken of this fact because I was almost a stranger to it.

As to what regards me personally in the matter, I shall certainly not occupy your attention with it. I shall not address to the *Courrier des Alpes* and the *Echo du Mont-Blanc* the celebrated apostrophe which M. Guizot hurled at his calumniators. I will confine myself to

telling them that they will labour in vain, they will never obtain from me the honour of an answer.

And yet, Gentlemen, I must confess that though habituated to the quarrels of the press, and though accustomed to abuse and calumnies, I have not been able to avoid a feeling of keen pain in reading the abuse and the calumnies which have been heaped upon me with so much fury by the *Courrier des Alpes*. And this, not because the editors of that journal have had the merit to invent new abuse, and new calumnies! not that they have found a venom more subtle than that which the writers of the re-action mix every day in their inkstands wherein to steep the darts which they hurl against me, but because among the persons who patronize this journal, who subsidise it, are some with whom I have long been on terms of intimate friendship, who have had opportunities enough of knowing me to make me think that the calumnies applied to me would never have been allowed admission to their hearts; persons, in fact, whom I might and ought to expect to meet one day in the ranks of my political opponents, but whom I never thought to have seen ranked amongst my personal enemies.

That is what grieves me (*with energy*) but I can assure the House and the honourable M. Micheli, that this cruel deception has neither shaken my convictions nor weakened my courage. (*Bravo!*)

Yes, Gentlemen, I know that when one enters on political life in such difficult times, one must expect to meet with the greatest deceptions. I am prepared for them.

Even should I be compelled to renounce all the friends of my infancy, though obliged to see my most intimate acquaintances transformed into deadly enemies, I will not fail in my duty: I will never abandon the principles of liberty to which I have devoted my career, and to which I have been faithful all my life. (*Warm expressions of approbation.*)

Let us come to the Savoyard question. Savoy is in a difficult position; she has a right to expect that the Government should devote its attention specially to her case. Savoy is discontented; we cannot conceal it from ourselves.

Savoy considers it hard to be called upon to bear new burdens. She finds it hard to be obliged to pay expenses which are the consequences of events which have never perhaps originated in her own wishes. I consider there is some foundation in that.

I also frankly confess that of all the parts of the painful task which has been entrusted to me, the most melancholy to me is that which concerns Savoy.

Every time that I am obliged to propose a new tax, the difficulties of its application beyond the Alps are those which most disquiet me. However, Gentlemen, by virtue of the great principles of equality upon which the statute is founded, principles which we cannot violate without violating the statute itself, it is impossible for the Ministry or the House to avoid subjecting Savoy to the common law.

But I hope, Gentlemen, that Savoy will be resigned; I hope that when once the passions are calmed, Savoy will understand that the sacrifices imposed upon it are rendered necessary in the interest of our liberty and of our national independence. Savoy is a noble and generous country. The Savoyards are well educated and intelligent: the extreme parties will not long be able to mislead her, and when Savoy is convinced that the new burdens of the State are inevitably necessary in our political position, she will, I repeat it, submit to them. When liberty and independence are in one of the scales of the balance and pecuniary sacrifices in the other, I know beforehand that it will not be the interests of pounds, shillings, and pence, which will carry the point in the noble heart of the Savoyards.

At the same time, Gentlemen, the Government is aware that it has special duties to fulfil towards Savoy,

that it has not only to look to the maintenance of her rights and liberties, but that it has to consider her material welfare at the time that she is imposing new burthens. Savoy raises claims many of which are well founded. Savoy claims to be relieved from the expenses of public worship, and she is right.

Savoy claims that an effort be made to render her capital more abundant, and she is right. Lastly, Savoy claims a share in the great enterprises of public utility, and to enjoy like others the advantage of railroads, and she is right. The Government, rest assured, will do all in its power to meet these just claims.

As to the expenses of public worship, after this year a considerable portion will be carried to the account of the "Economat", and the Government hopes shortly—perhaps next year, or in two years at furthest—to deliver Savoy from this irregular charge. With respect to credit establishments, the Government has already done something for Savoy in favouring the establishment of the Bank of Savoy, in facilitating the circulation of the notes of that bank, and in receiving them in all the public offices of the State. It is true that this establishment has not yet produced any great fruits; nevertheless it has already caused a diminution of from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 per cent. in the rate of interest at Chambéry. The war which the bankers of Chambéry wage against it is the best proof of the services that it can render. But that is not enough. The Government will use all its efforts to facilitate the raising of money upon landed property. If we shall be able, as we hope, this year to obtain the provisional enactment of the new code of civil procedure, we shall have done a great deal for Savoy.

Savoy has at its gate one of the principal markets of the capitals of Europe, Geneva. If its inhabitants have trouble in procuring money in this town, the principal causes consist in the tediousness and the difficulties of our civil process, in the trouble and impediments which creditors meet with when they are forced to appeal to

the tribunals to recover their debts. The reform of the code of procedure will remove a part of the inconveniences which I have pointed out to you, and will render the market of Geneva much more accessible to Savoyards. This reform will allow them to await with patience the organization of the land-banks on which the government is now engaged, but which it cannot submit to your deliberations in the course of this session.

Finally with respect to the railroads, the government is resolved to proceed to the establishment of a line to join this side of the Alps with Lyons and Geneva. It has already caused deep investigations to be made on this subject. As soon as the House shall have voted, as I hope it will, the road of Suse, they will recommence those investigations, with a view of drawing up a definite plan. The Piedmontese government is in negotiation with the French government, some French companies, and the Genevese Government, and we may say the affair is in good train. I have a firm hope, and I believe my hope is shared by my honourable friend the Minister of public works, that next year we shall be able to submit to the House the project relative to the Savoy railroad. If by the means which I have pointed out to you we succeed in satisfying the legitimate desires of Savoy, if at the same time that we make new taxes we can make administrative and economic reforms, and Savoy may be sure that we shall not fail in carrying them out, I think that in a few years she will be, even as regards her material interests, indemnified for the sacrifices to which we are obliged to subject her.

I hope that in a few years experience will prove to her that liberty will have been not only a fruitful source of intellectual and moral advantages, but also of material benefits to her. She will then be persuaded that liberty is not ungrateful to those who make sacrifices to preserve her, to those who are not disheartened by the first obstacles they may meet—who do not mea-