

said that the Government was not in a position to make the changes it contemplated. These hon. gentlemen know now that that was the real desire of the people in 1894, and they know that when we came into power, without being tied to the chariot wheels of any manufacturers, we did revise the tariff on those lines. For that, they denounced this Government in Parliament. They said that our tariff was not a success; but it has been a success, as they know. They know that the people have approved of that tariff, and they cannot take issue with us on that ground. What, then, did they do? They turned around and said that we did not change the tariff at all. But did they not know that when we laid it on the Table? I said at Perth—and that is what my hon. friend referred to, and what my hon. friend from Lisgar (Mr. Richardson), whom I do not see present, found fault with—I said that the tariff as an issue between the two political parties had arrived at such a stage that it could not be longer considered, and never, in all probability, would be considered an issue in the same sense in which it had been an issue previously; and I said that because hon. gentlemen opposite know that our tariff—a tariff revised upon lines indicating that raw materials would be made more free, and that the consumer would be considered, but in which the reductions would be made in a careful and moderate way so as not to destroy any industry—is in accord with the policy which the people have approved of. They dare not go before the people and attack us on that ground. And, therefore, they intend to come here, and they intend to go before the people of this country to show what? Why, that they did not know what they were talking about when they denounced us, and that we actually have not changed the tariff at all.

Did I mean, Mr. Speaker, that this Government had abandoned the traditional policy of the Liberal party, that we did not intend, as the hon. member for East Toronto (Mr. Robertson) well said, to attack the citadel of protection? Not at all. I meant that we intended to carry out the policy which we have laid before the people, and which, so far as we have gone, we have carried out carefully, consistently and as thoroughly as it was possible to do, in accordance with the well-understood wishes of the people of Canada, as they are understood by the hon. gentlemen sitting there, as well as by the hon. gentlemen sitting here, that the tariff of Canada should be dealt with upon lines more favourable to the consumer, more favourable to the extension of trade, and in the direction of removing all unjust restrictions from trade. That is the policy which this Government has laid down by the voice of its responsible Finance Minister.

Then, I pointed out also, and I take the liberty of pointing it out again, that there was another point upon which the tariff

might be regarded as not being an issue. We introduced a clause providing for giving a preference to Great Britain. That clause has been attacked in a great many ways. My hon. friend from West York (Mr. Wallace) attacked it the other day. The hon. gentleman will get his answer in due time from the Government benches; he will get it from the gentleman most competent to deal with the subject, and most familiar with the figures, and that answer, I apprehend, will be satisfactory to the people of this country and to the followers of the Government. But what I was pointing out was that we had introduced a clause in the tariff providing for preference to Great Britain. That clause has been denounced by hon. gentlemen opposite. Now, are they sincere in that denunciation? I do not mean to transgress parliamentary rules by attacking the sincerity of any hon. gentleman in this House; but I think I may attack the sincerity of a party as a whole. Is the Conservative party at this moment sincere or insincere in attacking and denouncing the preferential clause of our tariff? It is an easy matter to settle that. If they were in power to-morrow, would they repeal the preferential clause? That is a simple question. I appeal to the sentiment of every man in this House, when I make this statement, that, notwithstanding all the denunciations of the hon. gentlemen opposite, if they were placed upon the Treasury benches to-morrow with a majority of four to one in this House, they would not, and they could not, repeal that clause. They could not get a House of Commons elected in Canada pledged to, or known to be in favour of repealing that clause. Then, I think, Mr. Speaker, if we have so fully, and so fairly, and so accurately, gauged public opinion upon that important phase of the tariff question as to put upon the Statute-books a provision that no political party in this country would repeal, we may regard that phase of the tariff question as being settled.

I thought that I might trespass upon the attention of the House to set myself right, in view of the remarks which the hon. leader of the Opposition made with the very laudable, and, in political warfare, very proper, intention of creating dissension in our ranks.

My principal occasion for rising to address the House this afternoon is the speech that was made by the hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) on Thursday evening. I need only refer to the fact that that speech was made in such a way—saying nothing further about it—as to consume an unnecessary length of time. I do not think that anybody who listened to the hon. gentleman, would have imagined that he was trying to get through what he had to say in the least possible time. The hon. gentleman laid himself open to the suspicion that, knowing, as he did, that the House was going to adjourn at twelve o'clock, and that there were to be four or five days in