

Mr. LAURIER. It cannot be economy, because if it could be economy to dispense with a collector at Toronto, the Government would remove all the other collectors in all the other ports. They would be bound to remove, not only the collector at Toronto, but at Montreal, Halifax, and all the other ports. There is more. We have a nominative Senate in this country. The Senate are appointed by the Crown. In my judgment this is a most inefficient system, one which cannot last very much longer. But the other side have always maintained that a nominative Senate—that at least has been their pretension in my Province—is the very bulwark of Conservative institutions. Well, if that is the case, I should deem it of some importance that appointments should be made when vacancies occur. I find that, in the month of November last, there were no less than six vacancies in the Senate. As you know, Mr. Speaker, death has been of late very cruel with us, but out of the six vacancies the Government summoned up the necessary energy to make two appointments, and, after having done that much, their energy was exhausted and they fell back in their cushioned seats and left the other four vacancies unfilled. Why were only two appointments made when six should have been made? I do not know the reason why all the other seats were not filled; but in regard to one I have reason to know that the cause why it was not filled was that there were two rival claimants, who had rendered services—not to the country but to the right hon. gentleman, and the hon. gentlemen were balanced between the two and found it impossible to make a selection. This is hardly a good public reason for the neglect, and we ought to have a better reason than that as a justification of the omission to fill those offices. Take, for instance, the seat of Mr. Plumb, which has been vacant for two years; take the seat of Mr. Ferrier, who has been dead for eighteen months. Certainly I was justified in saying that the Government are now in such a position that they cannot perform ordinary administrative acts. Perhaps, however, I am doing an injustice to the right hon. gentleman who leads the Government. Perhaps he is inactive because he is intimidated, because he fears to make a false move, because of late he has not been as lucky as he was formerly. Of late it seems that, every time he has made a step,—if I may be allowed the expression—he has put his foot in it; because, if he took a step in advance, he has had to retrace it. Examples are not wanting. It was only in 1888 that he compelled his followers to vote to forbid the free entrance of fruits and other articles from the United States, and four weeks had not elapsed before he retraced his steps in regard to that. Then again, about ten weeks ago, the Government passed an Order in Council prohibiting the carrying by American vessels of bonded freight to Victoria, B.C.; and not only that was totally reversed, but we have another example and a more famous one. In 1888 the Government were induced to put an additional duty of \$1 upon pine logs, but it was not long after before the Government were convinced that they had made a false step. It would not be convenient, in view of the time at my disposal, to give all the examples of the manner in which the Government have been moving forward and backward, and, though the Government were pressed again and again to retrace their steps, they

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refused to do it in this House, because they felt it would be to their detriment, though they did it afterwards. My hon. friend from North Norfolk brought the question of the duty on saw logs before the House, and asked the House to compel the Government to carry out the policy which he proposed; but they would not do it, and the Government policy was defended by their followers, by the member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien), and by the member for South Norfolk (Mr. Tisdale), and by my hon. friend from Toronto. Yet the prorogation had scarcely taken place before the Government abandoned the policy which they had forced their followers to accept a few weeks before. At the same time the Government did something further, for which I am bound to give them credit. While they abandoned the duty on saw logs, they invited reciprocity in lumber with the United States. It is not often that I can congratulate the hon. gentleman upon his policy, but in this case I do so, although he has not altogether met my views in regard to it. He offered certain reciprocity to the United States, but his offer was too niggardly. Why did he not offer reciprocity over the whole line and the whole list? I do not know why he did not. Perhaps he was conscious that he was stealing the clothes of his opponents, and felt some remorse in consequence. I give him credit for having that feeling, but he need not have been afraid. We are generous on this side of the House. It is our policy to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked; and when the hon. gentleman feels inclined to put his hand into our wardrobe the next time, I invite him to take the whole suit. The National Policy is such a threadbare policy that we are moved to compassion when we see that there is nothing more than that on the shoulders of the hon. gentleman and his party. I must give full credit to the hon. gentleman and his policy. I would not take an unfair advantage of anyone. Though they have only appointed two senators, still they appointed a Commission to go to Scotland and to Holland to find out the best methods of catching and curing and packing fish. Why, Mr. Speaker, to send Canadians abroad to learn from the Scotchmen and the Dutchmen how to catch and cure and pack fish is something extraordinary. I should have thought that it would have been the Scotchmen and the Dutchmen who would have come here to learn from Canadians the best methods. I suppose that we shall have a report of that Commission presented to us, and I do not want to speak about it now.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Then why do you?

Mr. LAURIER. I do it because I strongly suspect that this Commission is merely a herring drawn across the track to hide an otherwise indefensible transaction. In the Speech presented to us to-day, it is manifest that the Government have not anything of great consequence to present or anything which requires any lengthened remarks; but it is also manifest that they have not taken into consideration the condition of the country at this moment, and especially the condition of the agricultural population. The Government seem to have reached a state of perfect felicity in the contemplation of their own perfection. They have invented a National Policy which they seem to consider the *ultima thule* of all possible progress.