

have adhered strictly to the terms of the resolution which was adopted at the Liberal Convention of 1891, in which the Liberal party declared for a treaty of reciprocity in natural products and a carefully-considered list of manufactured products. Why did we put this restriction in our resolution? Why did we state in so many words that the reciprocity which we would negotiate if it ever became our lot to do so, would be general for natural products, and would be confined to a carefully prepared list of manufactured products? Because, Sir, there is a vast difference between reciprocity in natural products and reciprocity in manufactured goods. This is the reason we have acted with this prudence. I was not present at the Conference which took place between my two friends beside me and Mr. Kinnear, but it is not a great effort of imagination to suppose that the Americans were far more concerned about obtaining reciprocity in manufactured products than in natural products, but our negotiators would not consent to any reciprocity in manufactured products, but insisted on limiting the agreement simply to such manufactured products as agricultural implements.

Well, we limited our negotiations to that, and in doing this, I know that we have not gone as far as certain sections of the community wanted us to go. A certain section wanted free implements altogether, but we did not think it prudent or advisable to go that far. And why? The reason is that the men on the treasury benches, who are responsible, recognize in tariff matters the wide difference between manufactured and natural products. It is easy enough to put up a customs duty or enact a protective duty, but it is always a difficult task to decrease or remove such a duty. The reason is well known. It is obvious that if you raise the customs duty or impose a protective duty you create at once a fictitious economical atmosphere; and if the industries established under the tariff and under that temperature and condition, have to face suddenly a removal of the duty, you might annihilate in the course of one night millions of capital and reduce to non-employment thousands of operatives. That is why we have acted as we have done. We have gone very cautiously, with great care into this agreement. When we came into office in 1896, we had the same problem before us, the same consideration weighed upon us, and we took the utmost possible precaution—whilest giving as we were bound to do, to the consuming public an abatement of the tariff—we took every precaution in so doing not to injure any existing industry, and I think we have been successful

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Although it

was part of our policy to obtain reciprocity in industry. The only industry affected is fully in our clasp and have not injured any with the United States, we have acted care- that of agricultural implements, on some of which the duty has been reduced from 17½ per cent to 15 and on other from 21 per cent to 15 per cent. It would have been pleasing to myself at all events to have gone beyond that but we considered that if we did, we would perhaps not do justice to the large number who have invested money in these establishments.

This government we not exist for the farmers alone or the manufacturers alone, for any one class, but for the manufacturers and farmers and for all the classes which compose our nation.

Some hon MEMBERS. Hear, hear

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not admit that there should be any antagonism between class and class. I do not admit that there should be any antagonism between the manufacturer and the farmer. The manufacturer is the best friend of the farmer, and the farmer is the best friend of the manufacturer. Let them walk hand in hand, let each profit by the trade of the other; but so far as we are concerned, for 14 years we have administered the government of this country on these lines, trying to do away with collisions between class and class, trying to keep all abreast of one another, keeping always in mind the motto, Freedom for all and privileges for none. That has been our policy and that policy we shall continue. There are men who believe that we are going to recklessly ruin industry and capital. Capital is timid under all circumstances and the man who is at the head of affairs and the ministers who assist him, would not be worthy of the public confidence if they were not always careful to see that capital will be safe, whenever it is invested in any industry in this country.

Mr. BURRELL. Would my right hon friend permit me one question? Does not the very argument he has put up, on behalf of the manufacturers apply with crushing force to the fruit industry?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Not in the least. My hon friend will observe that we have not obtained for the manufacturers a free market on the other side of the line, but we have obtained a free market for the fruit growers.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Might I ask a question?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. One is enough, I think.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I think so, too.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not ob-