

These gentlemen, having obtained power, and having obtained it on these pledges, began to feel less virtuous. There were evidences of shakiness. These evidences came to the ears of some of the faithful, men who honestly believed in the pledges that were made. I know some of these men, and I could look at them at this moment in the House, who declared that they had heard such rumours but they did not believe them, that if the Liberal party betrayed their rank and file in that way, they would hear from them. And I am expecting to hear from them within the next four weeks. Evidences of shakiness began to be seen. The first was that hon. gentlemen opposite refused to define the principle upon which they would ultimately base their tariff. They said, and with some reason: We cannot arrange this tariff in the heat of a session and just after we have come into power. Most of it had already been arranged by resolution; they had already declared that they knew all about it. But you must make some excuses for men when they come to the practical test of doing, and we could not press them too much as to the actual detailed definition of their tariff. But if they had been honest in their pledges, if they had honestly meant to carry out those pledges, they would have had no hesitation in saying to the people's representatives assembled here last July: We propose to revise the tariff; it will take us some time to get the details in order, but we are going to revise it on the principle of a revenue tariff, pure and simple—or of free trade, pure and simple—or whatever principle they chose. That they were not prepared to do that is an evidence that they began to waver the very moment they had attained what my hon. friend so ardently hoped for—power. Well, Sir, this wavering was seen in something more, it was seen in the issuing of a tariff commission. For seventeen years, these gentlemen knew all about it. According to them the Liberal-Conservatives could not gauge public opinion, but they themselves knew public opinion, knew it very well. The Liberal-Conservatives, they said, were not in touch with the business currents of Canada, but they, then in Opposition, were business men and knew the drift and set of that current accurately. But when they were placed in power, to gain delay, and for other purposes, they issued a tariff commission. That was evidence number two. They deferred the session. That was evidence number three. There were hints of betrayal of the policy in the leading papers to such an extent that the Montreal "Witness," which has fits of sturdy independence—and I wish that the fits were more chronic—and the "Farmer's Sun," the organ of the Patrons of Industry, with whom the Liberal party made a contract, began to mutter with discontent. Said these papers: They talk of betraying their pledges. Let them beware. We will

Mr. FOSTER.

not believe that the Liberal party will be untrue to their pledges. Does my hon. friend wish me to read some of these statements? I think I must do so.

Mr. DOMVILLE. Dispense.

Mr. FOSTER. I have not any of that beverage to dispense. My hon. friend will have to pay his own way. What says the "Farmer's Sun"?

The McKinley tariff was in full blast when the Liberals met in convention at Ottawa. They declared, nevertheless, for a revenue tariff for Canada, and, to quote a resolution moved by Mr. Fielding, denounced "the principle of protection as radically unsound and unjust to the masses of the people," and maintained "that any tariff changes based on this principle must fail to afford any substantial relief from the burdens under which the country labours."

A tariff almost identical with the McKinley tariff is before Congress. But, because their party is now in power and wants the support of manufacturers, a great many Liberals have come round to the Tory view, and say that in consequence of the high protection proposed in the States, we must have high protection in Canada. Hence the tariff the Government are going to make this session, these people argue, are going to be based on the principle of protection; in other words, Mr. Fielding must proceed with the tariff on the lines which he condemned in 1893, and we shall get no substantial relief from the burdens under which the country labours.

The Liberals who talk in this strain, are apostates from the faith. If the Dingley Bill were ten times more restricted than it is, why should we keep up our high duties to still further injure the Canadian farmers? If I am to be prevented by Act of Congress from selling my cattle, barley, beans, wool and eggs in a free American market, is that any reason why the Canadian Government should make me pay exorbitant prices for coal oil and barbed wire, cotton goods, implements, wall paper, harness or stoves? It is, or ought to be, a first-class reason why Parliament should deliver me from the home combines and let me buy the necessaries and conveniences of life and production as cheap as possible, whether in the United States or in England. Such was the Liberal doctrine from 1878 until last June.

It goes on to say:

To tell the Canadian farmer that, inasmuch as Laurier has failed to get reciprocity, which the party had hoped to get, and as the Americans intend to restore the McKinley on his produce, therefore it is advisable that he should continue to pay an extortionate sum for anything he has to buy, especially if he buys in the States, is the last sort of language we expected to hear from men who professed to be free traders.

Sir, that sounds very much like language I have heard used by the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce. The article goes on:

If his Bill should be unsatisfactory as a measure of tariff reform, the Government will at once begin to go down hill in this province. The notion prevalent among trimming Liberals that "our friends will swallow anything," is a mistaken one. The Liberal farmers, as men like Dr. Landerkin and Mr. James McMullen must know, are not in the humour to put up with a