

of the hon. member for South Oxford in referring to that matter, and in taking credit to himself and his party for the manner in which those negotiations were conducted, and the issue to which they were brought. Why, Sir, the late Mr. Mackenzie, speaking in Ontario, stated that he never expected to get a dollar as the result of the Halifax Commission. Such a statement by that hon. gentleman, who was then leading his party, was prejudicing the case in Canada before it was heard; but, after he and his party had done everything they could to prevent the ratification of the treaty, we succeeded in obtaining an award of \$4,500,000. The commission met in Halifax in 1877, and it is a remarkable circumstance, that while the hon. member for South Oxford was a member of the Government at that day, neither the hon. gentleman nor any of his colleagues in the Government took part in the commission. The leader of the Government, the late Mr. Mackenzie, was so busy here watching the treasury, as is recorded in his great historic letter, that he was not able to turn his back less the treasury might be depleted in his absence. He had not sufficient confidence in his colleagues to leave them and go down himself to Halifax and take part in the commission. Nor had he sufficient confidence in any member of his Cabinet to send one down in his place, and so he actually went outside of his own colleagues and selected Sir Alexander Galt, formerly a colleague of Sir John Macdonald, and who was afterwards appointed by Sir John Macdonald, High Commissioner in London, to represent Canada on the commission. If, therefore, any credit for the conduct of the negotiation is due to any one, it is certainly due to Sir Alexander Galt and not to any member of the Mackenzie Administration. The hon. gentleman cannot justly claim any credit for the result of that commission. The fact that Sir John Macdonald's management secured to Canada the Washington treaty is what obtained for us the Halifax award; and if hon. gentlemen opposite had had their way, we would never have received a dollar and our fishermen would never have received the bounty. In discussing the question of the Budget, we have to consider the policies of the two parties. The policy of the Conservative party is well known to every Canadian. It was inaugurated in 1878, and confirmed by the people in 1882, 1887, and 1891. But, Mr. Speaker, we have had on former occasions, when hon. gentlemen opposite have propounded fiscal policies, very great difficulty in understanding what they really meant, and it is equally difficult to understand them to-day. We remember that after their defeat in 1887, when their policy of slander and abuse failed in its object, and when in 1888, they changed leaders, they found it necessary to form a new policy. It was then we heard, for the first time, of the

policy of commercial union, unrestricted reciprocity or continental free trade. Call it what you will, it meant discrimination against the mother country; it meant the adoption of the American tariff; it meant placing the tariff of our country under the control of a foreign legislature. That doctrine was most persistently advocated by hon. gentlemen opposite, it was also advocated by their friends in the United States, with whom they were corresponding continuously and with whom they had agreed on a common platform. So much was this the case, that when we asked for a definition of the Liberal policy, we were referred by the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright), to the resolution introduced in the United States Congress by Mr. Hitt, then chairman of the committee on foreign affairs. That was a most extraordinary statement. In fact, this movement was so akin to annexation that it excited our suspicions and alarm and its American advocates said distinctly they meant annexation. When this fact was brought home to the Canadian people, they again rejected hon. gentlemen opposite and relegated them to another five years' term on the Opposition benches. Sir, the fact is that the people of Canada realized that that policy was a policy disloyal to Canada and disloyal to British connection. But there has been seemingly a wonderful change in the views of hon. gentlemen opposite. From the highest pinnacle of protection on which they stood when they urged the adoption of the tariff of the United States, they have descended to the lowest rung of the free trade ladder. One is amazed at such a change, and, in seeking for a reason, it seems to me that they desire to rehabilitate themselves in the good opinion and esteem of the people of Canada—which they have lost; and that their quasi treasonable movements being discovered, they attempt to associate themselves with some form of policy, or some cry in which the word "Britain," or "British" appears. Hence, we have them to-day advocating a policy diametrically opposite to the policy they advocated in 1891, when they declared that they had nailed the flag of unrestricted reciprocity to the mast, and were determined to keep it there until they sailed into the harbour of political success. They hauled down the flag—these hon. gentlemen are great at hauling down flags—but I think that when the opportunity is afforded us, as it will be in the general election, of placing before the people of Canada what these hon. gentlemen mean by free trade as it is practised in Great Britain, the result will be the same as before, and they will find themselves after the next general elections in quite as small a minority as they are in this House at the present time.

Mr. FERGUSON (Leeds). They have abandoned that.