

are views in regard to a perplexing and complex question, which I present with much hesitation to you, and pass from the subject to the hope that they may before the next session of Parliament be the object of public attention and criticism, that we may be enabled if possible to make some progress towards the prevention of industrial war by rendering that violent procedure unnecessary in order to secure a fair measure of justice between all classes of employers and employees throughout the country. (Cheers.)

Benefits of Present Tariff.

Perhaps now you would bear with me while I make a few remarks upon trade and other matters. No doubt it would be interesting were I in a position to announce the views of the Finance Minister—(hear, hear)—or even my own, upon the ever-present question of tariff changes; but as no Minister, not excepting the Finance Minister, is, under our system of government, at liberty to make any such announcements except on the proper occasion, namely, in connection with the budget speech in Parliament, I shall not trespass upon forbidden ground, but confine my remarks to existing conditions. (Laughter and applause.) The present tariff has been in force for five years. From its introduction in 1897 until the present moment our *political opponents have condemned it*, although whenever reminded of the prosperity which it has brought to Canada they, with strange reasoning, declare it identical with their old National Policy, and fall down and worship it, and then rise up and abuse it. (Laughter and applause.) For eighteen long years their National Policy had control of the trade of this country. The longer it was in force the worse became our condition—(hear, hear)—and never in her history did Canada endure so serious a depression as in the last ten years of the N. P. (Hear, hear.) During that period the tariff was a political issue evoking the strongest passions, which seriously affected trade itself. Finally the high protection party was defeated, and in obedience to the mandate of the people we overthrew the N. P. in 1897, substituting therefor a *moderate tariff with a preference*, ultimately of one-third off the duties, in favor of the mother country. (Cheers.) That tariff our opponents assail.

The Attacks on the Preference.

In framing that tariff it appeared to the Government that a preference to Great Britain would not only be to the advantage of Canada, but of the mother country as well. (Hear, hear.) Here was our country, of vast, illimitable yet undeveloped resources, practically without a neighbor in America willing to trade with her on fair terms, whilst across the ocean was our mother country, that had ever been *Canada's true friend*, and whose market was open to us. True, we were selling to her comparatively little, for Canada's resources were little known in the old land. Still it appeared to us that our trade with her was capable of great development if we proceeded the right way about it. (Hear, hear.) Aye, more, there was the opportunity of setting an example which, if followed, might yet secure to us on preferential terms the markets not only of Great Britain herself, but