

protective duty of 25 per cent., which has built this industry, has not benefitted the consumer and the farmer, and every other person in this country either directly or indirectly? But I will not dwell longer upon this. I have endeavoured to make it clear that this assumption, which is the chief corner stone of the free trade edifice, is historically untrue.

The Premier's Proposition at Variance with His Past History.

But, whether true or false, it is in direct opposition to that policy under which this country attained its greatest prosperity. It is in practical opposition to the policy of the hon. the Premier himself which he has carried out during the whole period of his tenure of office. We are told by the hon. the Minister of Finance that people could not be enriched by being taxed. I would draw the attention of the government to the canal policy of this country. Now what did it mean? We have been expending millions upon millions year after year, we have been taxing the rate-payers of this country, we have been issuing bonds and imposing burdens upon the people, that will not be wiped off till a very remote period of Canadian history, in order to divert and control the carrying trade of the West. Still, that policy has been vindicated by all the public men of this country and by no gentleman more effectively and sincerely than by the hon. the Premier himself. Now what did that policy mean? What did we desire to attain by it? If I understand it right, it is a policy intended to foster and promote the great commercial industries of this country, and by artificial means to direct the trade of the great West of the United States, through Canadian channels, in order that Canadian commerce may have the benefit thereof. Now, if that is not a policy of protection, I do not know what protection means, and if that is not done by taxing the people, I do not know what taxation means. If, therefore, this enormous expense for canals does not enrich the country, then the hon. the Premier has to account for a heavy sin to the people of this country, for having taken money out of their pockets and piled up a huge national debt without doing the nation any service. That policy, though a protective one to the great commercial industries of this country, is consistently or inconsistently justified by every free trade member of this House. Why did we build our harbours, our lighthouses, and our piers away down the coast? We did so for the purpose of *fost- r- ing and protecting* the commerce of this country. We did so to afford protection to the lives and property of our fishermen and to foster the fishing industry. The whole policy of the Public Works of this country is essentially a protective one, and if it is a wrong policy, then we have been doing a great injustice to the people. Why, again, do we exempt from taxation those articles required for the manufacture of ships, down on the sea board? We do it in order to protect this branch of industry, for protection may be given as effectively by a system of exemptions from duty as in any other manner.