

free themselves from a doubt which the pledge makes. They are between two, and this being between two, in that sense, is just what causes the great uncertainty. If they absolutely believed the party, they would cut their cloth for free trade garments at once; but as they do not, they are cutting no cloth at all for their garments, for they do not know whether it is to be free trade or whether it is to be protection.

Mr. LISTER. Would protection to gold mines hurt you?

Mr. FOSTER. How would it affect the oil interests? There is no man in this House who knows better than my hon. friend—and I know it, and my hon. friend knows that I know it—there is more than oil that is bothering hon. gentlemen opposite. My hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, who does let out those little things so easily sometimes, let it all out of the bag the other night when, standing up before us, he made the remark: You cannot hurry us too much with the tariff, we have got to consult our leading friends before we can bring it down. A political tariff they are making it; it is not a tariff in the interest of the country. They knew all that before. They went through the country and held some commissioners' meetings. They knew more about the subject after that, and now when it is necessary to put the result down in black and white, they find it necessary to consult their leading friends.

Mr. WOOD (Hamilton). There are mouldering branches, and we have to take all those off.

Mr. FOSTER. There is a mouldering branch.

An hon. MEMBER. He will be taken off.

Mr. FOSTER. He will be lopped off at the next general election.

Mr. WOOD (Hamilton). I should like to see you there at the time.

Mr. LISTER. The hon. gentleman may go into another county.

Mr. FOSTER. Yes, that is allowable. This is a free country, and it is a good thing to have another county to go to sometimes. The leader of the Government knows that. Since hon. gentlemen opposite have been in power, have they done anything to show that they will promulgate a policy that will be calculated to promote the best interests of this country? Nothing whatever. There is the same attitude of uncertainty and inconsistency maintained. I desire to call the attention of the House to this matter. I am about to read a delectable parable from the leader of the Government. This was delivered in 1882.

Mr. LISTER. Oh, oh.

Mr. FOSTER. I knew hon. gentlemen opposite would laugh. They laugh that they are to be held to a principle which is more than five minutes old. A member rose in Parliament and swore by all his political tenets that such and such was the only principle upon which a tariff could be built; but because he did so eight years ago, the hon. member for Lambton says that does not count. No, it does not count for hon. gentlemen opposite. If it were made five minutes ago, it does not seem to count. But I am going to address an argument to the country, where it will count. In 1882 my hon. friend moved the abolition of the coal duties. He spoke on that question and on kindred questions, and among other things he combatted the idea that because the United States pursued a bad policy we ought to pursue a bad policy.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. FOSTER. The hon. member for Kent laughs; no, it is the hon. member for Lambton.

Mr. LISTER. Now you are jumping the fence.

Mr. FOSTER. The present leader of the House is reported in "Hansard"—fortunately it is not a newspaper report—to have said:

Well, then, if the hon. Minister assents to this position, and his followers also assent to it, why do they legislate against nature?

They will tell me that the Americans also legislate against nature. Can this reason ever be given in a civilized country, that because one nation legislates against nature, we should also legislate against nature? The hon. gentleman reminded me of what is said of the Chinese mode of duelling. In Paris, where duels are frequent, a man who is offended calls his adversary out and they settle the matter between themselves,—

I call the attention of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue to the following, as it may be an aspersion upon an adopted country:—

—but in China, if a man is offended, he commences by opening his bowels, and, when this is done, the bloody sword is sent to his adversary, who also opens his bowels, so that instead of one man going to the grave against the laws of nature, two men do so.

On this continent, instead of having one nation legislating against the laws of nature, you have two pursuing that course.

The argument holds to-day. The United States have entered into this duel. It has taken the sword, it has opened its bowels. It has sent the sword to my hon. friend the First Minister; but on the way it got into the hands of the Finance Minister, and what he did was to open his own bowels. The argument was then irresistible; you cannot sustain a bad principle in Canada because it is sustained in another country. The United States is placing the duties higher against this country, and so the argument is still stronger. Does the hon.