

dicate, which, as the Agreement was the work of able men and the Syndicate was the best that presented itself, were exaggerated, hollow and consequently weak. We understand, of course, the exigencies of party tactics, though we are strongly of opinion that the statesman will prove the most successful of tacticians who shall first learn to act without reserve on the conviction that the people want to be governed by honesty and truth; but you cannot have the advantages of tactical finesse and those of a morally sound position at the same time.

The remark may be extended to the case of the Coal Tax. A few months ago what denunciations of that tax we had from all Opposition speakers and writers! Anybody suspected of upholding it, or even of failing to treat its authors as public criminals, was held up by the leading Reform organ as a flinty-hearted oppressor of the poor. But when the time came for giving effect to these convictions by raising the issue in the House of Commons and voting against the re-imposition of the tax, the storm of indignation died away and was succeeded by ominous silence. By allowing the tax to be re-imposed without a division, the Opposition has virtually sanctioned it. It will be said that it was futile to divide when the Government had a large and sure majority. But a minority which never risks a division for fear of a defeat will remain a minority for ever. The Ministerial members for Toronto and other western cities, at all events, would have voted with halts round their necks if they had supported the tax. The duty of resisting to the utmost unjust taxation in any case was clear. It was not the fear of being beaten that caused the Opposition to shrink from dividing or even from speaking above a mutter against the Coal Tax. It was the fear of losing the support of the Maritime Provinces, a prize which is now within their grasp. For this they consented to dry up their tears of pity and harden their hearts to the sufferings of the western poor. Once more we recognise the strategical necessity, but once more we say that compliance with strategical necessities is not inflexible patriotism, and that the game of Party is played pretty much in the same style on both sides.