

city, they knew reciprocity would benefit Canada, and that it would be a good platform upon which to go to the people, if they could make the people believe that they were sincere. They made the appeal upon that platform, they wished to get a fresh expression of opinion at the polls in order to strengthen the hands of their delegates to Washington in 1891. They realized that the people would return no party in power which was not in favour of reciprocity. Sir, it is not necessary to waste any more time in relating what took place, what attempts they made, and how sincere they were and what the result of the negotiations was. Upon false pretenses they obtained a verdict from the people, largely upon that platform; they sent a delegation to Washington with the result that in a few hours the whole thing was at an end; and no genuine bona fide effort was ever made on behalf of Canada to obtain a reciprocity treaty. Sir, why was it? Because reciprocity itself is irreconcilable with the interests of the combinesters of this country, and the Government did not even dare to make a sincere effort to obtain it. But there is something else. You will remember how, during the regime of the Mackenzie Government, the Minister of Finance of that day was branded and hounded from pillar to post all over this country, because he had deficits for three years, although he had surpluses for two years. The people were told that the incompetency of the Liberal party was such that it was impossible for them to have anything else but deficits. We were told what would happen if the National Policy was at an end; and no genuine, bona fide were adopted. We were assured that although the National Policy might increase the burdens upon the people, although they would have to pay higher duties, still there was one thing the National Policy would do, that although it might raise the tariff and make the people pay more, all the money would go into the treasury, we would get back the money we had paid ourselves, and there would be no such thing hereafter as a deficit. But what is the result? After seventeen years the Minister of Finance is obliged to come down and acknowledge that, in a year when there is no famine and no rebellion, after seventeen years' experience of the National Policy and of a high tariff, there was a deficit of \$4,500,000. But the present deficit is more than the combined deficit of the three years under the Mackenzie Administration. In justification of that deficit, what did the Finance Minister say to the people? He said: It is true there is a deficit this year, but I will explain it in this way: If we had not reduced the duties two years ago on sugar, there would not have been a deficit of \$4,500,000 this year, of over \$1,000,000 last year, and an anticipated deficit of one or two or three millions next year. The

Finance Minister throws out this crumb of comfort to the people that, while there is a deficit, it is because he did not tax them higher. The hon. gentleman now turns round and says, we must make up this loss and increase the duties in order to wipe off the deficit, and he announces to the people that by giving another turn to the taxation crank he will increase the duties, tax the people to the mast-head and wipe off the deficit in this way. It is extraordinary how the Finance Minister can claim credit for his feats. In eloquent and rounded periods, he boasts that while there was large deficits this and last year, still he had permitted the people to keep in their own pockets the money which he might have taken from them; and now when he is face to face with the problem of getting rid of his ugly and ill-visaged deficits, he again actually claims and expects credit when he proposes to do the very thing he boasted of not doing before, namely, raise the duty again and bleed the consumer more and more. Sir, I think the Finance Minister could give a better explanation to the people of this country as to how he could get rid of the deficit. He could tell the people with a good deal of satisfaction and sound reasoning that instead of again placing duties on sugar and other articles and compelling the people to pay duties to make up the deficit, a better way to wipe out the deficits would be to reduce the duties on articles now controlled by the combines. Instead of reducing the duties on sugar, why does he not lower the duty on rope and cordage for the benefit of the fishermen and workingmen? Thus he would take away some of the millions of dollars of profit which the cordage combine is reaping, and leave these millions in the pockets of the consumers. Besides, more money would be taken off the shoulders of the people. The hon. gentleman could also reduce the duties on cotton, and instead of the people paying taxes to the cotton combines, more money would flow into the public treasury and so also relieve the burdens of the consumers. It would be more satisfactory I should imagine to the Minister of Finance, if instead of raising duties to make up these deficits he should on all articles under the control of the combines, reduce them, and thus enable the people to obtain cheaper goods and at the same time have the treasury replenished, and withal keep away that ugly and ill-visaged visitor, whom we have had with us last year and this year and which will be with us next year, the deficit. The Finance Minister could take the people into his confidence, and tell them frankly the cause of his deficits. He could say: There has been for years past a continual leakage in the treasury, by which contractors and others have robbed, swindled and gobbled up the public revenue. He might perhaps say, I had nothing to do with it, it