

friend thought it better to frame a policy himself. And he framed it in such sibylline terms that everybody could find in it, as in the oracles of old, whatever suited his own convictions, passions and prejudices. And having thus delivered himself, my hon. friend started on a missionary tour. With that of course I find no fault—quite the contrary. He started to evangelize the country, setting his sails closely trimmed so as to catch every passing breeze. Now one would expect that in a platform of the Conservative party, the word 'protection' would be writ very large indeed. But in this platform the word 'protection' is writ very small, so small indeed that it is not visible to the naked eye. I do not pretend, however, that the idea is not there. It is there, but so hidden that it is impossible to find it without great effort. How far we are from the flamboyant rhetoric of the old national policy! The word 'protection' has always occupied such a prominent position in the councils and the policy of the party that one cannot conceive how in this document it could have been omitted otherwise than accidentally. On the other hand one cannot conceive that a document of this importance, which was to be the law and the gospel and the prophets of the party, which was supposed to contain a panacea for all our evils, any omission of the word 'protection' could have been otherwise than wilfully designed. What is the key of the mystery? The key is that my hon. friend was in a sore trouble. In these later days there are in the ranks of the Conservative party protectionists and protectionists, just as the French say there are fagots and fagots. We know that in the Island of Lilliput there were two rival factions—the Big-endians and the Small-endians. Between them there arose a fierce controversy as to how eggs to be eaten should be broken—whether broken at the big end or at the small end. And in the modern island of Lilliput—I mean His Majesty's opposition—there are big Endians and small Endians; there are big protectionists and small protectionists. There are protectionists in the city of Toronto and in some other places who would have the tariff raised as high as Haman's gallows, and in the west they are protectionists who would have the tariff brought so low that protection would not be distinguishable from free trade. And between these two factions my hon. friend hesitated. If he brought them together, he knew there would be a terrible smashing of eggs before they could agree upon the end on which their eggs should be broken. But my hon. friend managed to give good hope to the one and to the other without committing himself to either. Some few years ago my hon. friend did give us his idea of what protection ought to be—that it ought to be 'adequate' protection. But it would appear that, in the course of time, and according to experience, 'adequate'

protection became inadequate. Therefore under the work of commentators on the party platform adequate protection has given way to 'reasonable' protection. But what is reasonable protection and what is unreasonable protection no commentator has yet told us, and where the line is to be drawn between reasonable and unreasonable protection we are left to surmise. My hon. friend himself simply ignored the difficulty and told us not what his policy was, but what his policy would do. These are the words of my hon. friend.

We therefore stand for a fiscal policy which will promote the production within Canada of all useful articles and commodities that can be advantageously manufactured or produced from or by means of our natural resources, having due regard to the interests of the consumer as well as to the just claims of our wage-earning population.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. May I ask the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) to favour me? Would he kindly read the plank of the Ottawa Liberal platform of 1893 on that subject?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. If I had it under my hand I would willingly do so.

Mr. FOSTER. Oh, you've lost it entirely.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No. I can say that there was in it an absolute denunciation of protection. Sir, my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) has told us what his protection policy would do, but he has not told us what would be the legislative enactment that would perform this miracle. Indeed, this is a secret of the gods—and among these gods I do not include my hon. friend himself, because he does not himself know. He could not define his policy, but he has managed to give hope to him who hopes to see the tariff raised as high as Haman's gallows, and also to him who hopes that the tariff will be reduced to the lowest possible level; and both may live in the same delusion until they become victims of the same deception.

Next to the fiscal policy, the most important plank, if I may say so, which has been introduced into the platform by my hon. friend is that dealing with the government ownership of public utilities. I said introduced by my hon. friend, but I must withdraw the word, because it does not correctly apply to the situation. It is not my hon. friend who has introduced that plank into the platform. In this matter he is not the leader, but a follower—and a reluctant follower. The gentleman who has introduced that plank in the platform is not the leader of the party, but sits a little below the leader, and we see him (Mr. W. F. Maclean) smiling as I speak. I must give him his due. He is the leader of the party in this matter as in some others also. We were told last session that he was no longer admitted to the caucus of the party. Sir, this is a matter of no consequence, for whether