

protective system which had been the policy of the country for some years, and under which interests had been created which the House should respect."

Let us see now what he stated at Hamilton on the 16th of January, 1874, on the eve of the general elections:—

"Sir Francis Hincks stated last year, on his election tour and in the House of Commons, that he was in favour of incidental Protection. I said I was also in favour of it. It is a stupid phrase at best, but it means simply this, that as long as duties are levied upon articles imported, they should be levied upon the articles produced by our own people."

Such a result, I repeat, would not be a surprising one, for it has been witnessed in more than one country, Protection gaining ground steadily everywhere, whilst the theory of Free-trade—which has never been truly practised—has, to-day, perhaps, less advocates than it had in the days of Adam Smith and Richard Cobden. When Protection was established in the neighbouring Republic, under the auspices of the celebrated Henry Clay—a man whom history will class among the greatest statesmen of the age, and the greatest benefactors of his country—one of its foremost opponents was another political man, almost as highly considered, almost as celebrated, as his great rival, Daniel Webster. Well, Sir, the Tariff—the American system as it was called—worked with such advantageous results, it revived agriculture, commerce, and industry so rapidly, it developed the national resources to such an extent that, after a few years of experience, Daniel Webster became a convert to that same policy which had been the main lever of the prosperity of the Republic. Let me quote a short extract from a speech he delivered after an experience of nine years of a Protective Policy:—

"Candour obliges me to remind you that when the Act of 1824 was passed, neither he who addresses you nor those with whom he usually acted on such subjects, were ready or willing to take the step which that Act proposed—they doubted its expediency. It passed, however, by the great and overwhelming influence of the Central States. New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. New England acquiesced in it. She conformed to it as the settled policy of the country, and gave to her capital and labour a corresponding direction. She has now become vitally interested in the preservation of the system. Her prosperity is identified, not perhaps with any particular degree of protection, but with the preservation of the principle; and she is not

likely to consent to yield the principle, under any circumstances whatever. And who would dare to yield it? Who, standing here and looking round on this community and its interests, would be bold enough to touch the spring which moves so much industry and produces so much happiness? Who would shut up the mouth of these vast coal pits? Who stay the cargoes of manufactured goods now floating down a river, one of the noblest in the world, and stretching through territories almost boundless in extent and unequalled in fertility? Who would quench the fires of so many steam engines, or stay the operation of so much well-employed labour? Gentlemen, I cannot conceive how any sub-version of that policy which has hitherto been pursued can take place without great public embarrassment and great private distress. I have said that I am in favour of protecting American manual labor; and, after the best reflection I can give the subject, and from the lights which I can derive from the experience of ourselves and others, I have come to the conclusion that such Protection is just and proper, and that to leave American labour to sustain a competition with that of the over-peopled countries of Europe would lead to a state of things to which the people could never submit."

Let us hope, Mr. Speaker, that we shall find more than one Daniel Webster in the ranks of the Opposition, if our National Policy continues to revive the commerce and the industry of the country as it has done since its establishment. But even if the National Policy had not been so advantageous to Canada within the last months, I claim that it would be premature to judge of its usefulness, and that it would be detrimental to the best interests of the country to change it after such a short experience. There should be but one opinion, Sir, on the desirability of remodelling our Tariff as seldom as possible in order not to create uncertainty and uneasiness in our commercial and industrial operations, and I contend that my hon. friends opposite are doing an unwise, an unpatriotic work in clamouring at the present juncture for a complete change in our fiscal system. Nay, I will prove that the present course they are following in opposing the present Tariff has been condemned by no less an authority than the hon. member for West Durham, who stated in the last Provincial campaign of Ontario—in which he took a very prominent part—that the National Policy should have nothing to do with the local elections, and that it would not be wise to reverse our present fiscal system until a sufficient experience had proved that it was