

refer to the records of the hon. gentlemen in carrying out their pledges in other directions. Let me say that no case like the present has ever occurred in the history of Canada before. There was no time when there was so much uncertainty with regard to any previous revision of the tariff in Canada, and when the people did not have at least something before them. Before the adoption of the National Policy, it was only a case of how much the tariff might be raised by percentage. Then we had the National Policy, to which the Liberal Conservative party were committed; they were committed irrevocably to the maintenance of that tariff, and there could be no question then as to the permanency of the tariff if that party were sustained in power. There could be no doubt in the minds of the people after the general elections as to what the character of the tariff would be. There might be many things regarding details that had to be worked out, and that must always more or less affect the commercial interests of the country; but the general principle was so clearly laid down and adhered to, that the business of the country became inseparably connected with it, and there was not a single doubt in the minds of the people as to the broad grounds upon which the policy of the Conservative party would proceed. Now, I wish to point out to my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce one or two things. I am glad to see him here, because he has declared to the country that thirty million dollars were taken annually out of the pockets of the people that never went into the treasury. Now, Sir, he and his friends have been nearly ten months in office. The hon. gentleman has slept, and no doubt has taken his ease, at least during nearly ten months. Now, during that time, without making a very close calculation, according to his statement, about twenty-five millions dollars have been filched from the pockets of the people that have not gone into the treasury. Now, I want to ask that hon. gentleman and the First Minister, if it be true that a greater amount by far than the customs revenue of this country is taken each year improperly from the pockets of the people, how is it that ten months should have been allowed to elapse without their taking any steps to stop a course that is so vicious, so detrimental to the public interest, and that is producing such results as have been stated by the Minister of Trade and Commerce? I say, Mr. Speaker, it does seem to me that no delay can be excused in putting a stop to an evil of that kind if it exists, as hon. gentlemen have stated.

There is another class of people, the farming community, to which the hon. gentleman who last addressed the House referred, this class being composed of about three-quarters of a million of people interested in this matter. We have had pointed out

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to us more than once the great evils under which the farming community has suffered during recent years. The evils were described as being of a very serious character, and if they were half as bad as stated and crystallized into the platform of the Liberal party, surely a remedy ought to be at once applied. In addition to the large sums of money declared to have been taken from the pockets of the people, what do we find? We find that hon. gentlemen opposite, in 1893, declared:—

It had decreased the value of farm and other property; it had oppressed the mass for the enrichment of the few; it had caused a great loss of population; it had checked immigration; it had impeded commerce; it had discriminated against Great Britain, and it had been the means of fostering trusts, corporations and monopoly.

Now what would be the remedy? All hon. gentlemen would have to do would be to come down with their tariff, and the people will secure commercial emancipation at once; the farmers will look for a rise in the value of their property; the masses will be provided with labour; the discrimination against the masses will cease; combinations and trusts will cease, and all the wrongs suffered would terminate at once. It appears to me that some reason ought to be given, other than a Franchise Bill that will not be required for four or five years. Why should the Government delay a single hour in bringing down the tariff and proceeding with that important measure if their statements be true? It has been stated in general terms by the ex-Finance Minister that this side of the House was willing to proceed with this Franchise Bill and that the Opposition were willing to assist the Government in making it a good measure. That is a very reasonable proposition. This is a Bill that should occupy the place that properly belongs to it in the business of the House, that position in which it should have been placed at the outset considering all the circumstances, and especially as hon. members desire a short session. I am sure the First Minister must know that party politics do not go so far as to divide us in a matter of national importance. We all agree that this should be a short session in order that the leader of the Government may go to England and occupy there that proud and prominent position which belongs to a great nation like Canada. He must also realize that the statement made by the ex-Finance Minister was made in good faith. But we are met with what would be called obstruction, if the same thing came from the Opposition. This could be called useless legislation—I say unless as regards the present time, because no hon. member will declare that this Bill would be necessary this session or next session, or that it is imperative that it should pass now. I am free to say that the Franchise Bill, like all such laws, must be changed from time to time, and we on this side of the House are willing to pass a