

ly half the people fighting for the destruction of that policy, and capital, which is always sensitive, not knowing what the outcome was to be? Election after election was fought on that. Gradually greater confidence arose, but up to 1896 nobody knew for certain what the settled tariff policy of this country would be on a change of government. 1896 came, followed by 1897 and 1898. Then it was settled that the policy of this country, not the policy of a party, was protection, a fair and adequate protection. Then things went ahead. They could not go ahead to the same extent before that. Then great progress took place—why? Because the principle was settled, and settled as we supposed forever; and everybody said, now we can set full sail and dare the ocean, for the old threatened storm of opposition to our trade policy has passed away. There was another instance. The time was in this country when it was a struggle between parties as to our transport system. The Liberal-Conservative party wanted to build railways; the Liberal party opposed it. The Liberal-Conservative party wanted to give subsidies to steamship lines; the Liberal party opposed it. The Liberal-Conservative party wanted to build and widen the canals; the Liberal party criticised it. And, Sir, until these gentlemen came into power there was that war between the factions of this country on the policy of transport development. They came into power, sobered when they assumed the responsibilities, made wise when they got down to the people and found out what they really wanted in a practical way; and these gentlemen became the sponsors for an advanced transport system east and west, even more liberal than that which the Liberal-Conservative party had favoured before. Then things went ahead. The country said: that settles it; here is a nation united, with a fair protection, with an east and west transport system to our own sea-board; with all these things settled, why should not the country go ahead? Now, what has happened? Every one of these policies is unsettled. No man can look out into the future and say how any of them is to be decided. One party in this country, I believe the strong majority, says: put through this new-fangled policy, and you will break up the confederation into its original elements as far as trade and commerce and intercommunication are concerned; you will break up more than that. This policy is the first half of what is intended to break up what we supposed was the settled policy of this country as to adequate protection for the industries of this country. You have knocked off half of it; and thousands of men who are to-day supporting the party opposite are howling for the destruction of the other half. And on the other side of the

line is an administration which is forcing on this Dominion as fast as they can force it free trade in all products. The transport system, which ran east and west, is now proposed to be tapped by north and south lines. So that you have everything to-day in a state of unsettlement and disturbance from the confederation and unity and integrity of this country down through the protective and the transport systems of the country. That is what these gentlemen have done, and I tell you that the sooner we get to the people of this country, and the sooner we settle this thing, the sooner we shall get into such stable conditions as will enable Canada to go ahead and leave even her past progress in the shade in the future great progress which shall come to her. This pact has unsettled not only the trade in our country, not only the trade as between us and the United States, but the trade as between us and Great Britain. It has unsettled what we supposed were the well-ascertained relations existing between us and the empire as a whole.

In the matter of trade it has thrown an apple of discord into the whole British Empire, that is undoubted. The Finance Minister pledged himself to the British ambassador that he was not going to impair the British preference. But he has impaired it, and he knows he has; and what is more, the British people know now that he has. He knows that the cable which he sent over will not, in the face of the facts as they are coming out from day to day, prove to the British people that he has not disturbed the imperial preference. It is not fair trade that he proposes even. Do you mean to tell our farmers that when New Zealand, Australia, France, Denmark, Austria-Hungary and Switzerland and Argentina can send their butter, cheese, and natural products into our market free of duty, whereas our products are not allowed to go into these markets on the same terms—do you mean to tell our farmers that that is fair trade? It is not; it is unfair trade. They have impaired the imperial preference in many respects. Just look at the absurdity of it. This government is treating with Australia to have a preferential system of trade between the two, and then is throwing open to Australia and to the world our Canadian market and thus giving away the very thing on which we relied to make a preferential arrangement. The point I wish to make is that despite all that Providence has done for us, despite all our great resources, despite the enterprise exhibited by our people, despite all the progress we have made and are now making, the government comes forward at this inopportune time with a proposition which imports disturbance and discord into our whole national trade situation.