

gentlemen generally indulge in, as to the happy condition of the country, due primarily to their own efforts, and then to Providence. There is not the slightest reference to the prosperity of the country, due in the first place to the National Policy and then to the good crops, the benefit of Providence. Neither the hon. gentleman who proposed the Address, nor the hon. gentleman who seconded it, indulged, as was usual in former years, in congratulations as to the benefactions which had been bestowed upon this country by the hon. gentleman and his colleagues. Well, Sir, I want ever to be a generous foe.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Hear, hear.

Mr. LAURIER. Nay, more, I claim to be an admirer of the hon. gentleman for many causes; and for many other causes also, if I were to scan his career, I would find reason for blame and censure. To day, however, since his followers have failed to bestow upon him the praise to which he is entitled for his policy, I will do so. How is it, Mr. Speaker, that no reference has been made to-day—or only very slight reference, which was not coupled with any congratulations at all—to the increase in the price of cereals? The hon. gentleman who moved the Address stated that though the crop had not been a very good one, still the prices of cereals had largely increased since last season. Can it be, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. gentlemen shall not receive their due meed of praise because the price of cereals has been increased. They have forgotten that the inducements given to the farmers of Ontario in 1878 was that they could regulate the price of wheat and other cereals by Act of Parliament. They were not flies on the wheel; they knew all the resources of legislation, and if only they had the power in hand what would they not do? The price of cereals would always be kept up, it would never go down. In fact, after a few years that the National Policy had been in force, when the boom was prevalent from one end of the country to the other, their followers could stump the country and ask the people to vote for the Government because, as they said, the Government had increased the price of wheat from 79 cents to \$1.40 a bushel. It is true that afterwards the price fell, and the hon. gentleman no doubt was applied to again and again, to resort to those powers of legislation of which he had boasted while in Opposition, and to restore the price. But still for many years the hon. gentleman was obdurate; he put it off from to-morrow until to-morrow, but now at last we have the price of cereals gone up again. And why, I ask again, no mention has been made of this? The hon. gentlemen have not been accustomed in the past to so much modesty, and I want to give them the due praise to which they are entitled. But, Sir, if no mention of it is made to-day it is because the farmers of Ontario who at one time believed in those promises, have seen their utter folly. The farmers have now understood that the duty on wheat and cereals, though it is an impediment to trade, though it is an injury to those in the Maritime Provinces and the Province of Quebec, who have to buy wheat, and though it is fatal taxation, still that duty is no benefit to them, and they now understand that the National Policy so-called, in so far as they are concerned, is a mockery, a delusion and a snare. Snare, I say, and the word is not too strong. It has been the habit, one of those little habits which we can always forgive, of the hon. gentleman and his colleagues, not exactly to say that they were the dispensers of the favors of Providence, but jocosely to refer to them; and a few days ago, while hunting for some other material, I happened to fall upon a speech delivered by my hon. friend at St. Andrews in New Brunswick, on the 8th of August, 1887, and which it may, perhaps, give him some pleasure for me to recall to the House. He then said:

"It is a great pleasure to me, wherever I go, to find signs of good Conservative Government. I find a first-rate crop in every part of Can-
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ada, and of course this great boon is due to a good, strong, honest and patriotic Government. We have always tried to show the Grits the great mistake they made in not supporting us. With Grit rule first came the Hessian fly, next the weevil, and later on when the Mackenzie Government was in power, came the Colorado bug. Now we have smiling crops, a contented people and a prosperous country."

Well, Sir, by parity of reasoning, if the hon. gentleman had gone to the vicinity of the city which he has the honor to represent in this House, the good city of Kingston, last summer, he would have seen there some evidences of a good, strong, honest Conservative Government; he would have found places where every vestige of vegetation was destroyed by the sun.

An hon. MEMBER. He was away from here then.

Mr. LAURIER. Well, in the Eastern Provinces and about the Lower St. Lawrence, he could have found other evidences of a good, strong, honest Conservative Government, in fields devastated by rains. Now, it seems to me that Providence has forsaken the hon. gentleman, for the country is visited by fire and water at the same time. I understand that this unfortunate region about the city the hon. gentleman represents, which is a dairying region, is now almost in a state of famine. The papers were telling only a few days ago of a farmer who had to sell two yearling cows and a spring calf for \$25, and I understand, from neighbors there, that this is not an isolated case; and if it were not for the railway facilities we have, there would actually be a state of famine in that section of the country. If the people of that section are compelled to sacrifice their cattle because there is not sufficient market in that Province, would it not be to their advantage to be able to sell their cattle on the other side of the line, if we had reciprocity of trade? I am told, however, that this is a bargain which cannot be made by one party alone, but which requires, not only the consent of our Government, but that of the American Government as well. But there is a thing that might be done by our own Government—it could remove the duty on coarse grains; and since this is a dairying country there cannot be a shadow of doubt that the removal of that duty would be a benefit to those people. But as that is part and parcel of the National Policy, it must be left intact even if it impoverishes the farmers still more than they have been impoverished already by the hand of nature. But be this as it may, the policy of the Opposition has received the strongest illustration which it could receive by those unfortunate events of last summer. I believe I can say at least for some sections of the country that that policy is gaining ground. All the growers of natural products—the fishermen, the farmers, the lumbermen—now see the utter hollowness of the promises made to them in 1878. The voice of the tempter is always sweet, and it was the mistake of the farmers in 1878 to listen to that voice. But as our foremother, Eve, yielded to the voice of the tempter, we can forgive the farmers if they did the same thing. But now, after an experience of ten years, they see that the true policy does not lie in the restriction of trade, but in the extension of trade as far as possible I say we have the producers of natural products with us. The manufacturers are still against us.

An hon. MEMBER. Not all.

Mr. LAURIER. Not all, I am glad to say, and the day is not far distant, I have no doubt, when all manufacturers will come to a better understanding of the true principles of political economy. Last summer there was a meeting of cotton manufacturers in the city of Montreal. I find a report of that meeting in the good Conservative organ, the *Gazette*, and among other things in it I see the following statement, not made editorially, but by the reporter who attended the meeting:

"By actual comparison, good farmers' shirting can be obtained in Canada to-day at a lower figure than the same material can be pur-