

The Government themselves admit the failure of their fiscal policy, and now profess their willingness to make some changes; but they say that such changes must be based only on the principle of protection.

We denounce the principle of protection as radically unsound and unjust to the masses of the people, and we declare our conviction that any tariff changes based on that principle must fail to afford any substantial relief from the burdens under which the country labours.

This issue we unhesitatingly accept, and upon it we await, with the fullest confidence, the verdict of the electors of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I do not generally complain of disturbance when I am speaking, but I have to face those hon. gentlemen opposite, and a little disturbance in front of a speaker is, as every one knows, more disconcerting than a great deal behind him.

Mr. SPEAKER. Order.

Mr. COCHRANE. It is the Ministers themselves.

Mr. FOSTER. They are the only guilty ones. Now, what have I proved? I have proved that the slogan cry of eighteen years has been: Death to protection, from the party who is now in power. I have proved that the flags under which they have led their forces to battle, that the party platforms they have enunciated, that the comments of their leaders upon those platforms all through, have had, whatever note of variation there may be, one strong and well-defined consistent note, and that was: Death to the principle and death to the policy of protection. Now what I wish to conclude from this is that when a party with that record of eighteen years behind it, comes into power, the people of the country are thrown, as far as business is concerned, into the condition of maximum uncertainty and doubt; because they fear that those men are going to carry out their pledges; they fear that the principle and policy of protection are going to be overturned, and that in their place something directly opposite is to be substituted. They, therefore, have a maximum of uncertainty and doubt in every business relation in which they are engaged. That to-day is the condition in this country. If my hon. friend, nine months ago, had declared to this House the principle upon which he would revise the tariff, that doubt and uncertainty would have been to a certain extent mitigated. He did not do it. All these years that slogan cry has been confronting every producer and manufacturer and disturbing their interests, and although my hon. friend sits here, and his party sits here, and do nothing with reference to that matter, every business interest in this country is feeling to-day a money loss in the present, and the utter paralyzation of effort for the future. They know not which foot to put forward, or upon what they rest when they have put a foot forward.

Mr. FOSTER.

The PRIME MINISTER. They know we will keep our pledges.

Mr. FOSTER. I am thankful to my hon. friend for that. If my hon. friend had a reputation in this country of having fulfilled every pledge that he ever made—which he has not; if the party opposite had the reputation in this country that a party ought to have, that on an issue like the trade question they knew their principles and were willing definitely to abide by them, there would not be so much doubt.

The PRIME MINISTER. There is some hope, then.

Mr. FOSTER. More than that. For the last fifteen months—and I defy my hon. friend to deny it—a whip of terrorism has been held over the business men and producers of this country, whose business and whose interests were founded in any degree at all upon the principle of protection which has been enforced in this country for eighteen years. Does my hon. friend think that he can go through this world of Canada for fifteen months and not know what is going on? Go to Champlain, if you like; go to Bonaventure, if you like; go to Wright, if you like; go to Brantford, if you like; go into any constituency before the general election or since, and I state what cannot be denied, that the Liberal manufacturer has been hopeful. Why? Because a promise has been made simply to his ear. There sits one to-day, there sits another, and you can find them all through this country, who, when you speak to them of the platform pledges of their party, say: We know a thing or two worth more than that, we know it won't touch us. The hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. Wood) sitting there, knows that he has made that statement over and over again, that the manufacturing interests of this country need not be afraid, they will not be hurt.

Mr. WOOD (Hamilton). Nor need they be.

Mr. FOSTER. My hon. friend acknowledges the corn, he could not do other than that. In every by-election which has taken place, the manufacturing and producing interests have been approached, if not by the leaders of the party, by the heelers of the party, and have been given to understand: The tariff is not made yet, you had better consult your own interests. What is the use of imperiling your own business by taking part in that election? You had better keep quiet. They have held that whip over the business interests of this country. My hon. friend knowing, his broken pledges of the past, and knowing the electioneering system which has been carried on in this country on that line, naively looks up in this House and says: Why don't people believe us, then? People have had a little too much experience. They do not altogether believe, and yet they cannot