

ways was the free-trade party in this country. I suppose no one will doubt that Sir George Etienne Cartier was a Conservative; I suppose likewise that no one will doubt the statement that the hon. member for Three Rivers (Sir Hector Langevin) has always been and is still a member of the Conservative party. At a dinner given to Sir George Etienne Cartier by the Quebec trade, on the 23rd December, 1869, Sir George Etienne Cartier, then the leader of the French section of the Conservative party, referred in the following words to the question of protection:

The Quebec manufacturers ask to be protected to the utmost. It is a preposterous proposition, as much so as are extreme ideas in connection with free trade.

This last system compels you to pay to the Government by way of a direct tax the same duties as before.

With unlimited protection, you strike a fatal blow at the foreign trade. Just inquire about that from the Americans. We will not commit ourselves to such a folly. We have decided to impose a revenue duty that will give at the same time a sufficient protection, reserving our right to change our fiscal policy according to circumstances.

In another part of his speech, in answer to a claim made for a foreign outlet by one of the audience, Sir George Etienne Cartier said:

You have got it: see what my hon. friend, Mr. George Stephen, of Montreal, did. He established a cloth factory at Cornwall, where, at the outset, he had to import labour by dint of money. Now he sells his cloths at lower prices than the Scotch or English manufacturers.

I was reproached by the Manchester and Sheffield people with giving too much protection to this industry. I replied to them that the maximum duty was 15 per cent, the same as the duty imposed on their own goods. How is it, then, they said, that you can sell at lower prices than we can? We are unable to manufacture as good and cheap cloths as those sent to Manchester by Mr. Stephens.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, this leader of the Ministerial party was opposed to an extreme protection. Cartier, a leader of the Conservative party, was in favour of a tariff for revenue and opposed to an extreme protective system such as the one we now have. As soon as 1873, Mr. Thomas White, who later was made a Cabinet Minister, said before the Dominion Board of Trade:

A 15 per cent tariff means more than 15-per cent in favour of manufacturers. We must add to that the rate of transport of the goods imported which represents 5 per cent on the average, thus actually bringing protection up to 20 per cent. This ought to be sufficient for any industry suited to this country. As to others, it would be a want of wisdom to keep them up through fiscal legislation.

I suppose Mr. Thomas White, who became a Minister, was surely a Conservative. But there is more, and I fancy no one will have any hesitation for a moment to acknow-

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ledge a Conservative in Sir Charles Tupper. Now, what did he say when, in 1878, the Mackenzie Government increased the duty from 15 to 17½ per cent? Sir Charles Tupper then said in this House:

I very much fear the Minister of Finance is going into the perilous path of protection, which will bring ruin and desolation unto us.

Not only was Sir George Etienne Cartier, not only was Mr. Thomas White, not only was Sir Charles Tupper in favour of a tariff for revenue and therefore opposed to a protective tariff, but even Sir John A. Macdonald had pronounced himself as opposed to protection. The hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) whom the Ministerial press calls an ally of the Opposition, which is false, the hon. member for North Simcoe, who has become a leader of a third party and wishes to be considered as a Conservative and a member of the Tory party, this hon. member, I say, has given out, since he has ceased to support the present Government, that in 1878, Sir John A. Macdonald had pronounced himself against protection and that he only launched forth the National Policy as set forth in his resolution of the 7th March, 1878, because Mr. Mackenzie had declared in favour of a tariff for revenue. He added that if Mr. Mackenzie should have declared for protection, he (Sir John) would have taken to free-trade. This statement of the hon. member for North Simcoe is corroborated by the hon. member for East York (Mr. McLean) in an editorial published in the issue of the "Canadian Magazine" for December or January last. We have moreover, a new substantiation of this fact in a letter from Professor Goldwin Smith, published in the Quebec press, in January last. Here is what one can read in this letter:

Till the election of 1873 was over, Sir John Macdonald disclaimed protection, and described his commercial policy as readjustment of the tariff. I had a personal interview with him a few days before the election, and I learned from his own lips that he foresaw the evil consequences of an application of protection to a country like Canada, as nearly as I can think myself.

And ever since we have seen the Conservative party changing its policy, for after the election in 1879, it did not revise the tariff by imposing at once protective duties ranging from thirty-five to sixty per cent as they now are. As an evidence of this, we have only to look at the statutes passed since 1879. We will find that these changes were brought about by degree, in proportion as protection did something for Sir John A. Macdonald and his friends. In the face of such facts, I have therefore a right to say that it is the Conservative party which has changed both its opinions and its platform: from free-traders the Conservatives became protectionists. But, as for that, what right have the gentlemen opposite to charge us with having no platform? The Opposition