

protection as we have it in Canada? Is it not strange that even now, on the eve of a general election in England, the great Conservative party do not adopt protection as their policy? They are very anxious to get into power, no doubt, they are anxious to submit to the people a fiscal policy that will prove popular, but no prominent man in the Conservative party of England has the courage to propose protection as the policy of that party. No, Sir, it is left for hon. gentlemen in this House on the Government benches to say that England is going to destruction, and that the policy of free trade has been the cause of it. In a short time you will see a general election in that country, and although on other questions the various parties will differ widely yet upon the question of free trade, Liberals and Conservatives, Unionists, Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites, will all agree. Sir, do you not remember that a little more than a year ago, the late Premier of this Dominion said that the National Policy as it existed for many years previously, should be changed, that it had brought about combines, and that it was doing some injury to some classes of the consumers of the country; and he said that the time had come when they should lop off the mouldering branches of that policy. What did that mean? If it was to be protection pure and simple, as the Minister of Public Works said the other night, protection as it was in 1878, why should the Prime Minister say that they were going to lop off the mouldering branches? That declaration, if it meant anything at all, meant that the policy of protection as it existed previously should not be continued in its entirety, but that some changes should be made, that the mouldering branches should be lopped off. A short time afterwards, in pursuance of that promise, the Minister of Finance made the announcement that the mouldering branches would be lopped off, that a reduction would be made in a great many articles upon which the consumers had been paying high duty. That announcement was received in this House by hon. gentlemen on both sides with a great deal of satisfaction. I remember well how hon. gentlemen opposite boasted throughout the country that the Minister of Finance was at last about to reduce the tariff on a great many articles; I remember how the Conservative press announced to the people: You are going to be relieved of some of your burdens now. It is true that during the first years of the National Policy, while the infant industries were in existence, it was necessary to keep up the tariff; but now as those industries have outgrown their babyhood and have reached manhood, it is necessary to give the consumers a chance, and these industries must now stand on their own feet. Such was the language of the Conservative press through-

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out the country; they promised the consumers that they were now going to get some benefit on account of the reduction promised by the Minister of Finance. The Liberal party also received the announcement with a great deal of satisfaction, and although it was not such a reduction as we had been fighting for, still we accepted it with pleasure, on the ground that half a loaf is better than no bread. But, Sir, did the Government make these reductions which were promised? We know they did not. They attempted to do so, and why did they fail? In almost all cases the Minister of Finance put back the duties of their original figures. And what excuse had the Finance Minister to make except that humiliating and degrading one, that it was a mistake of the printer, a clerical error? That was all the satisfaction he could give the people. And yet to-day, hon. gentlemen boast that their policy is the same as it was in 1878; they boast that the duties are as high to-day as ever they were. Why are they so high? They did try to lop off the mouldering branches. They knew that their policy had been injurious to the people, they felt that the time had come when the people should be relieved of some of their burdens; the Prime Minister had promised to give relief, and the Minister of Finance had come down with a revised tariff. Why, then, did the Government not go on and carry out their policy? Because, Sir, the combinesters had taken them by the throat and called a halt, and the Minister of Finance was compelled to put the duties back to the figures at which they were before; and to-day the Conservative party are boasting because they are not free men, because they were not able to carry out the promise of the late Premier and of the Minister of Finance; they boast, in face of the fact that they were taken by the throat by their masters, the combinesters, and compelled to restore these. Again we were promised that the National Policy would eventually give us reciprocity with the United States; but to-day they laugh at any person who will say that we want reciprocity with the United States. Oh, they say, it is only the Grits want that; reciprocity means annexation. Well, what did they mean when, in 1891, they dissolved Parliament one year before the time, and asked to be returned to power that they might negotiate reciprocity with the United States? This time, however, they have taken great care not to go to the country one year before the time; it is likely to be one year after the time. But four years ago they said to the people: Return us to power that we may enter into negotiations with the United States to obtain reciprocity in natural and in some of the manufactured products. Why did they say so? Did they mean it, and if they meant it, why did they not go on and make the treaty? They were convinced the people wanted recipro-