

adoption of the principle of protection. If my hon. friends had taken free trade and embalmed its principles in their tariff, they could have had no second tariff schedule. If they had adopted the principle of a revenue tariff on free trade lines, they could have had no reciprocal or second column in the tariff which they ask this House to pass to-day. From the time that protection was born in this country until to-day, there were two purposes it had in view. The first was to stimulate the industries of this country, in the competition, becoming every day more merciless, with foreign countries,—an outside competition added to the inside competition which has always been growing keener; and the second was to enable this country, when the opportune and proper time came, by lowering to a certain extent some of the items in her protective tariff, to gain for herself reciprocal trade privileges with other countries which are willing to give something in return for something we are willing to give them. Without a protective tariff no such reciprocal commerce could take place between this country and any other country, so that the very purpose for which a protective policy was adopted by the Liberal-Conservative party and maintained by it for eighteen years is to-day, in its entirety, swallowed whole by the Liberal party. After eighteen years of virulent denunciation and abuse of that policy, to-day they embalm it upon the statute-books of this country as their own.

My hon. friend, the Minister of Finance, thought it was necessary for him to make some excuses why they did that, and I wish the House to attend carefully to these excuses. The House will see what his reasons, if we can dignify them by that name, were. What was his first statement? It was that in 1893 things were different from what they are now, referring to the United States of America. What was his next statement? It was this. In 1893 it looked like tariff reform in the United States, and so the policy of hon. gentlemen opposite, while it looked like tariff reform in the United States, was what? Either one of principle or one of speculation. If it were one of speculation they built up their platform upon the mere supposition that may be the United States of America was going to relax its protective duties and so grant reciprocity. The speculative principle is strong in my hon. friend the Finance Minister. All trade is a speculation. If this was a matter of speculation, their idea was: It looks as if we might get reciprocity with the United States; things are not quite so hard as they were, and we may gain reciprocity by proclaiming ourselves a free trade or revenue tariff party. That was the reason, if there was any reason. But did you hear the Finance Minister, five minutes afterwards, declare that it looks to-day as if reciprocity might

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be got from the American Congress, and so they are going to keep up the tariff walls instead of taking them down? When it looked as if reciprocity were possible of attainment in 1893, they declared for the lowering of the tariff walls in order to get reciprocity. When it looks like reciprocity coming in 1897, they keep up the tariff walls in order to get reciprocity. Where is their consistency, where is their argument, where is their reason? But I take higher grounds than that; I do not put it down as low as the Finance Minister. I am one of those who believe that in 1893 the Liberals founded their policy on what they called and believed to be a principle. If the principle was good in 1893 under the McKinley tariff, it is equally good to-day under the Dingley Bill proposed, which is only 5 or 6 per cent more on the average than the McKinley Bill of 1893. Is it possible that what I stated the other night by way of rejoinder to an hon. gentleman on the other side, is true—that a principle with hon. gentlemen opposite is not sacred if it has had a day or two to cool, that they change with the passing days? Whichever horn of the dilemma the Finance Minister takes, whether he says it was on a speculative basis that their policy was framed in 1893, or whether he says it was a matter of principle, his argument is lame. If it was a question of principle then the principle remains; if it was a question of speculation, then the action of to-day should be exactly the same as the action of 1893, which was to lower the tariff walls in order to get reciprocity. Now, Sir, what is there in the excuse that the United States have changed? What was the state of things ever since the Liberal party have been denouncing protection in Canada? High tariff in the United States. Did gentlemen opposite ever stop in their denunciation, because, for instance, under the high tariff in the United States we would not throw down our tariff wall? Never. And the hon. gentleman who leads their party to-day introduced his illustration of Chinese duelling as his reply to an argument of that kind, that because the United States chose to hurt themselves, we should hurt ourselves in like manner. In 1893, when they sat in convention and formulated their party policy on the tariff, the McKinley Bill was in operation, and the McKinley Bill put an average duty on dutiable imports of 49·58 per cent, or nearly 50 per cent in round numbers. To-day, when they are deciding as to what they shall do, the Wilson Bill is the law of the land in the United States. If it is to be the law of the land no longer, its place will be taken by the Dingley Bill, which, under the proposition sent to the Senate is only a little more than 50 per cent on the average of dutiable goods. Does that make a difference in principle sufficient to completely change the foundation upon which the tariff policy of hon. gentlemen