

change, therefore, will make Mr. Laurier, when he comes here in June, far and away the most conspicuous and popular of all the visiting Premiers of the Empire.

Sir, I have more, but I spare my hon. friends. However, I think that I have said enough to show that it is not likely that our proposals will be regarded as highly traitorous and disloyal when they come to be laid before the English Parliament and public.

Now, Sir, a word or two with regard to the true inwardness of this tariff of ours. I beg to point out, and I particularly point it out to our friends who think that we have not gone fast enough or far enough, that its effects are going to be considerably more far-reaching than may at first appear. Now you will remember that up to the present time many of the duties have been absolutely prohibitive. You could not import many things from other countries in the teeth of the tariff which we have modified. Those duties, as I have pointed out, were concealed in most cases under specific or mixed specific and ad valorem duties. Those have gone by the board altogether with the solitary exceptions which I alluded to in the early part of my speech. I want the House distinctly to understand that when tariff schedule No. 2 comes to be applied, although there is a nominal maximum of 35 per cent, and although a fair time is given to all parties concerned to adapt themselves to the change so that no man may be rashly harried or disturbed by our changes, still when you make the deduction of 25 per cent the practical result is that you have a maximum of about 25 or 26 per cent, and that a very large portion of our imports will come in under a reduced schedule of something like 20 per cent. Now I venture to say that although that is attained by easy stages, and with due caution, so as not to cause a commercial crisis, this is substantially a revenue tariff, and the Government have redeemed their pledges which they made to the electorate of this country. Sir, let me say to my hon. friends that I have advocated reciprocity. And why? Because I knew that after protection had prevailed for a certain time, reciprocity was the easiest half-way house to a revenue tariff, and, in the long run, to free trade. I know and recognize the need of giving milk to babes and meat to strong men; and if some of the infants opposite squall a little in anticipation, they must take their dose all the same. I do not deny that to those who merely glance at the outside of our tariff, there is room for criticism. I am perfectly willing to admit that I was mistaken in one respect. I do not think that anybody who has heard me in this House would contend that I have willfully or unintentionally minimized the injury those gentlemen have done to the country; but I am bound now, after full consideration, to admit that I have since dis-

covered that they did even more mischief than I had ever accused them of doing. Sir, this National Policy has proved a most broken reed for our people to lean upon, and they know; and I believe, and it came out at every turn in the course of the tariff investigation held by my colleagues and myself, that the manufacturers of Canada never made a greater mistake than when they turned their backs on the revenue tariff of my honest and hon. friend the late Alexander Mackenzie. I believe that had we continued to go on under that revenue tariff, the growth of manufactures in Canada would have been wholesomer, sounder and larger than it is to-day, and the population of Canada would have been greater by many thousands of people. Not one but many have admitted to me that they regretted exceedingly that they had ever departed from the standard of a revenue tariff established in 1878. Sir, I must say that I cannot understand how any man who sits down and reads our public accounts, I cannot understand how any man who considers the returns of our census, I cannot understand how any man who has examined the evidence given before our tariff commission, can fail to come to the conclusion to which I came, that of all the mistakes, and they have been many and colossal, which those hon. gentlemen opposite committed, the greatest, so far as the interests of Canada were concerned—though perhaps not as concerned their own interests—was their adhesion to the protective tariff of 1879. But, Sir, that protective system left its fruits. Now in this, as in many other cases, the secondary consequences are even more injurious to the public than the immediate consequences. Up to that time there was a wholesome abhorrence of taxation on the part of the bulk of the people, but after being misled by sophistical leaders, it came to be supposed that the more we taxed ourselves the richer we were going to be. That removed every safeguard and every barrier which stood between us and extravagance and corruption, and verily we had our reward.

Now, Sir, I want to call the attention of the House to a few brief facts bearing on some of the remarks made by that hon. gentleman. I do not pretend to say that it will not be found possible to exercise still more judicious economy than we have yet been able to exercise in several departments. But I want to call the attention of this House to a few matters affecting the present financial condition of Canada in a very remarkable degree. We are confronted to-day with the fact that if our obligations were discharged, if we expend the various sums that we must expend in order to complete our unfinished public works and to fulfil the statutory obligations those hon. gentlemen have placed on the Statute-book, the annual expenditure of Canada can hardly be less than about