

united hostility of hon. gentlemen opposite, and some of our own friends who were less advanced on this important question at that time than I am happy to say, they are to-day. Now, Sir, it is very well known to the House that I have always been—from the first hour I entered this House—an advocate for a duty on coal. I never could see, and I cannot now, why coal should be exempt from duty, even as a pure question of revenue, any more than any other article found in the Tariff. Hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House join issue with us in that respect, and the ex-Minister of Finance calls a duty on coal an odious tax, while the hon. leader of the Opposition maintains here, as elsewhere, that it is a sectional tax. Well Sir, I can only say that I fail to see any foundation for the statement that it is an odious tax, or for the view that it is a sectional tax. What makes it an odious tax? Why, these hon. gentlemen say coal is a necessary of life! Yet the Tariff they propounded and maintained, provided for the imposition of duties upon other articles which are just as much necessities of life as coal. In this cold country, hats, boots and shoes, and clothing of all kinds, are necessities of life. It is not a matter of choice as to whether any individual in this country will wear these articles or not; they are articles of prime necessity, and yet hon. gentlemen opposite never discovered that, because these articles are absolutely necessary to maintain life in this country, they should be struck from the list of dutiable goods and put on the free list. Hon. gentlemen know right well that coal oil is as much a necessity of life in Canada as coal, and yet what was their policy with regard to it? Why, my hon. friend from Stanstead (Mr. Colby)—I beg to be excused for mentioning him by name—aided by all the Conservative strength that at that time was to be found in this House, was two years fighting the battle to bring down the duty on coal oil to a figure below 150 per cent. The hon. the ex-Finance Minister, although now so anxious about articles which are necessities of life, was prepared to maintain then an odious tax of 150 per cent. on the article of coal oil, and was only compelled to surrender at discretion when he found he was being pushed to the wall and that outside opinion overwhelmingly supported his opponents. Was the duty on coal oil a sectional tax? I would like to ask the hon. and learned leader of the Opposition if a tax on coal oil is not as much a sectional tax as a tax on coal. There is no coal oil to be found outside of Ontario. Whatever advantage was enjoyed by the industry, in consequence of the duty, inured to Ontario where the oil was to be found. Yet the duty was not called an odious or a sectional tax because oil was an Ontario product, and these gentlemen feel that it is quite right to denounce the tax on coal found in Nova Scotia as odious and sectional, while, at the same time, they resisted a fair and legitimate reduction on coal oil, the duty on which was, as I said before, not only equally odious but equally sectional, being four times as great as the duty on coal, as the hon. gentleman knows. I say, too, that these gentlemen have never been able to show, here or elsewhere, any reason why a duty should not be imposed on coal, the same as upon any other necessary of life. I may mention, as another evidence of our desire to foster and protect the industries of this country, that between 1867 and 1873, when we found we had more revenue than we required to maintain the public service in efficiency, we abolished the duties upon tea and coffee; and we did that essentially in the interests of the industries of this country, and with a view to fostering those industries, because it cheapened the cost of living, and in that way permitted the carrying on of the industries in a better and easier mode than otherwise was the case. Well, Sir, in an unhappy hour for the interests of Canada, gentlemen opposite came into power—not in virtue of the express sentiment of the country, not in virtue of a decision of the people at a time when the issues

between the two parties were laid before them—because in the General Election of 1872, the policy that had animated the Conservative party, the policy that had been so eminently successful in the promotion of the prosperity of Canada, was heartily endorsed by the people at the polls. But, Sir, these hon. gentlemen failed to meet the people at the polls on a policy of their own, and they adopted a system which is a favorite mode of operating with them—intrigue; and thus they succeeded in obtaining power. I say, Sir, that this was an unhappy hour in the interests of Canada, for I need not remind the House, Sir, that from that hour down to the time when they were dismissed from the positions for which they proved so thoroughly unequal, the fortunes of Canada were surrendered to hands utterly unworthy of the charge. They succeeded to power with an overflowing revenue; they succeeded to power with the trade, the business and the revenue of the country in the highest possible state of efficiency, and I need not tell the House, Sir, what the lamentable record of that five years of misrule was, during which they supplanted the protectionist policy which had been the policy of Canada down to that time, and introduced a policy of what they called out-and-out Free Trade—at least, to as large an extent as they could adopt it. Well, Sir, they have said on more than one occasion—I do not know, however, that the matter is very important—that my hon. friend the Minister of Finance and myself, as well as other hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, were formerly Free Traders. They have said, Sir—and they have endeavored to establish on various platforms and occasionally in this House the fact—that formerly my hon. friend and myself held different sentiments in reference to this great issue from those which we now entertain. I say, Sir, that the history of the past will fail to establish any such proposition. I do not, for a moment, hesitate to avow that when I was in the Government of Nova Scotia, and when I had the honor of occupying a position in the Legislature of that Province, I was a Free Trader. My policy was that of Free Trade, and why? Because it was utterly impossible for a small community of less than 400,000 people, situated as we were, without the means of obtaining a market outside of our own borders, even among Canadians, for any but a Free Trade policy to be adopted; but, Sir, hon. gentlemen opposite know little of the discussions of the past if they do not know that my hon. friend and myself took our ground in our respective Legislatures of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick strongly and clearly on the advantage of having all these Provinces united together in one great Confederation, and that one of the leading grounds on which we urged this change was, that it would enable a policy that would protect the industries of the country, to be adopted, and which otherwise was impossible. I say, Sir, that when the Reciprocity Treaty was abolished by the United States, as leader of the Government at that time. I went down to the Legislature of Nova Scotia and asked the Legislature to re-impose all the duties that were in operation previous to the treaty, and which had been suspended during the continuance of the treaty, and to adopt the same system in this relation, which had before existed; and, Sir, as I have said before, I, on all occasions pointed out to my countrymen, that while nature had given to Nova Scotia great natural resources, and such as had made other countries great manufacturing centres, and had built up flourishing and immense industries, it was utterly impossible for any such result to follow, unless we became part of a great Confederation, opening up an extensive market within ourselves, by which such industries could be fostered. I am told, Sir, that some remark which I made on the occasion of the introduction of the Tariff of the ex-Finance Minister, gave evidence that I was an out-and-out Free-Trader. Well, Sir, all I can say to this is, that if hon. gentlemen opposite will refer to the files of the