

" WHERE IS YOUR POLICY ?"

We have been expounding our policy year in and year out for a long time back. For months past I have been speaking very constantly, and in every speech I have made, I have stated one or more important political propositions forming part of the policy of the Liberal party. *But the parrot cry is repeated still ; and it will be repeated constantly, for want of a better.* (Cheers and laughter.) The Tories are very anxious to escape from criticism of their policy and their conduct, and that is one of the reasons why they are always raising this cry. (Cheers.) Talk to an audience about what they, who are entrusted with the conduct of affairs and with power to mould the policy and legislation of the country, have done, talk to an audience about what they have failed to do, talk to an audience about

THEIR PROMISES, PLEDGES, AND PREDICTIONS,

and contrast them with the sad results of their rule ; the Tories hear it all impatiently ; they turn away and call out, " Where is your policy ?" They are—and I do not blame them for it, it is very natural—they are extremely anxious to get away from the consideration of their own record and from the question whether upon that record they ought to be approved or condemned. (Cheers.) Now, let me deal with this cry for a little. First of all let me point to you that both here and in England *the tendency has long been to confine to the Ministry of the day all the important legislation*, and it has long been found almost impossible for a private member, no matter what his ability, zeal, or energy, to carry any great measure affecting the general interests of the country. Let me remind you that that duty has been both here and in England thrown on the Government ; so that it is said in England that the duty of an Opposition is confined principally to conducting a critical examination of the affairs of the country. It has been said by a great English statesman that this is the most important duty devolving upon the members of Parliament under the present system. England has had centuries of legislation, and there is now a large body of laws in force under which that country might continue to flourish without any amendment being made to the bulk of them for some time—though some important laws of theirs, in my opinion, require early amendment. We, in Canada, have received from England, and from France to some extent, the advantage of the legislation of both those great countries ; and our affairs could be carried on, and our material progress would not be impeded if we had, as to the main body of our laws, no amendatory legislation for some time ; though here, as in