

the disbursing of a large sum of money by the Dominion in the matter of the preparation of a voters' list, is and must be a matter of serious import; and in view of the fact that the Dominion Parliament and local legislatures have one and a common interest, why should they not endeavour to meet upon a common basis, and say that in all these provinces the franchise shall be alike? If that is done it would be much easier for this House, or for the Federal Government, to embrace an opportunity that would be afforded by the provinces to meet upon a common basis. Now, Sir, in regard to the resolution that was moved by the hon. member for York (Mr. Foster) last week, in face of the fact that the Government have made the announcement that next Tuesday, the 22nd instant, they are going to bring down their fiscal policy, there is not perhaps that serious demand that there was at the outset of this debate for the resolution of the member for York. But, still I think, in view of the fact that hon. gentlemen on this side of the House have in the past, and whose predecessors have for the past eighteen years, laid down the principle that a protective policy was in the best interest of this Dominion, the intervening days should be seized by hon. gentlemen on this side of the House to impress upon the Government the necessity of the maintenance of that policy which has been in force for the past eighteen years. It is true that hon. gentlemen opposite take fits and starts, so to speak, in their announcements about the tariff. One hon. gentleman holds out the bludgeon, while the next comes along in the most entertaining way, and says, in the words of the fable: "Will you walk into my parlour, says the spider to the fly?" This afternoon we heard from the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen), and I am sure that to the protected industries of this country his remarks can carry no consolation. That hon. gentleman, speaking of the tariff, said this, and I presume that he speaks with some little authority, because he speaks so often that he should have some authority:

No hostile feeling lies in the breast of the Government to any business interest that can hope to exist, but the duty of the Government will be to assail all the combined interests of the country.

Now, these hon. gentlemen have been for years before the public, on the platform, through the press, and in this House, declaring their policy. When one individual speaking for himself has made any statement, it may be fair to say that upon himself alone must rest the responsibility; but when the leader of a great party makes statements and makes announcements, it must be expected that he is warranted in making them, and that the party has a right to be bound by the statements that he makes. Sir, the more serious import is when hon. gentlemen do not make these

statements at hap-hazard, but coolly and deliberately. Now, only a few years ago there was held in this city of Ottawa a great national convention of the Liberal party, and on that occasion the present First Minister made speeches of a very sweeping nature. Referring to the protected industries of this country, he said:

Let it be well understood, then, that from this moment we have a distinct issue with the Liberal-Conservative party now in power. Their ideal is protection; our ideal is free trade. Their important object is protection, ours is a tariff for revenue, and for revenue only; and upon this issue we engage in battle.

Sir, later on those hon. gentlemen went before the electorate of this country bound in what is commonly known as campaign literature, and in that literature they make a direct onslaught on certain large protected industries of this country. For instance, speaking of the cotton manufacture, which is a large industry in this country, in a pamphlet published by the Liberal party and issued throughout the province of Ontario, we find this statement:

Mr. Edgar stated in the House of Commons—and the correctness of his statements has never been challenged—that the raw cotton fell in cost, between 1890 and 1893, one cent and six mills a pound. This, on the enormous quantity imported of about forty millions of pounds, amounted alone to a profit of \$660,000. * * * In other words, on the \$4,500,000 worth imported a tax of \$1,260,000 is paid, which goes into the treasury, and on the \$13,000,000 worth of cotton manufactured, an equivalent tax of \$3,640,000 is paid, which goes into the coffers of the combines.

The hon. gentleman assailed the cotton industry of this country as a combine, and this afternoon the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) declared that this Government would wage war directly against combines. No wonder that to-day in Cornwall, where there are magnificent cotton factories which every member of the House would do well to visit, those factories which have been running for years, are closed. I was there a few weeks ago, and it would be a matter for regret to every hon. member as it was to me, to see those immense cotton factories standing idle, the looms silent, while in the streets were the men, women and children who were usually employed there. The owners have taken hon. gentlemen opposite at their word; and to-day we have had it announced by leading members of their party that this is one of the combines that is to be attacked. True, the hon. gentleman did not say specifically: we are disposed and propose to assail the cotton industry; but hon. gentlemen have bound themselves in the past, both by speeches in this House and by issuing campaign literature all over the country, that if there is an industry in the country which they intend to strike, not with a gentle hand but with a rude hand, it is the cotton industry. Let me tell hon.