

hour any longer, but just to say this, that in this matter the Government lost a great opportunity. The country at one time believed, and always will believe, that the Government had made up their minds, until a few days ago, to avail themselves of it. Men who can put this and that together, and who can draw inferences from facts, thought it was the intention of the Government, in some way or other, to come forward with a measure of relief. These gentlemen from Montreal said they were received with great courtesy by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, and he led them to believe that he was only prevented by the pressure of his friends in Parliament, and the fear of not being supported by them, from bringing in such a measure. Now, I can scarcely believe that a pressure of that kind would have induced them to change their fixed policy. There are only two solutions to the question why they have acted as they have. One is this,—that my hon. friend the Premier desires to please the gentlemen from the Maritime Provinces by a return to the free-trade principles which he enunciated in Scotland. He was hampered on the one side by free trade pledges which he made at Dundee and elsewhere, and he was hampered, on the other hand, by promises made to his friends in this country and by the supposed necessity of electing my hon. friend from Montreal West. He was also hampered by his Sarnia speech. He had a choice of difficulties. He was a Free Trader in Scotland, and a Protectionist in Montreal. Therefore, my hon. friend was exceedingly glad to have this pressure brought to bear upon him, and he returned to his first love—his Dundee love. He threw over my hon. friend from Montreal West, and made him the scapegoat, and sacrificed him and his friends. Perhaps there might be another object—that when the Hon. Premier came to look at the difficulties of the tariff he got frightened. He remembered the horrible mess the Finance Minister made of it the Session before last, and his unsuccessful attempt to deal with the various articles; and my hon. friend—joining perhaps in his secret heart in that want of confidence which

everybody expressed in the Finance Minister's ability to make a sufferable, decent policy—was able to say to his colleagues, "Well, you see, these Maritime people won't vote for us, and this will be a good way of getting out of the scrape." And so, notwithstanding all the previous labours of the different Boards of Trade, and of the people from Montreal and elsewhere who were invited to express themselves as to the alteration of the tariff, and notwithstanding the expectations held out by my hon. friend from Montreal West, everything is thrown over, and here we are back where we were last summer. The hon. gentleman opposite has lost a great opportunity. The country would have been grateful if he had come forward with a measure for its relief, and I believe he might have expected the hearty support of hon. gentlemen on this side.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE — Hear! hear!

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD — My hon. friend smiles ironically. Perhaps the hon. gentleman, judging from the manner in which he acted when in Opposition, cannot conceive it possible that any party, rising superior to any party triumph, could sacrifice party questions for the good of the country. This is, however, the principle which actuates us upon this side. I am as strong a party man as my hon. friend, and will go as far for party as he; and parties can fight and have their struggles, triumphs and defeats so long as the country is not made the victim and does not suffer. But I say that that party is unworthy to retain the confidence of the people who, in their desire for victory, will forget the country. That is not the principle which actuates us on this side, and I hope it will never actuate us. Surely there is a wide enough field to fight political battles and urge political principles without injuring the country. My hon. friend must have felt in his own heart that he might have expected the strong support of this side to any reasonable proposition that could have been made for an incidental tariff to protect our manufactures and give them some aid, some alleviation, com-