

errors given utterance to during the present debate by our political opponents in general and more especially by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Rinfret). I have listened attentively, and I am tempted to say with pleasure, to the speech of that hon. member, and if he has not succeeded in convincing me, I am bound to admit that he almost captivated me by the charm of his language, the flow of his speech and the ease of his delivery. The speech of the hon. member for Lotbinière, evidently intended in the mind of its author to become an important factor in the next electoral contest, may be divided into three parts, for it contains three distinct accusations brought against the Conservative party: 1st, that of having burdened the country with an iniquitous protection; 2nd, that of having increased the annual expenditure for Administration; 3rd, that of having increased the public debt. My friend the hon. member for Montreal East (Mr. Coursol) has already triumphantly replied to the first of these charges. His convincing arguments, strengthened by undesirable facts, and a reasoning not to be resisted, have destroyed the slender scaffolding erected by ingenious sophistry, and over which drooped in timid fashion the banner of Free Trade. Of this charge, nothing remains but the feeble echo which reaches us at a distance of 300 miles from the weak organ of a party destroyed by its own unpopularity. Let us stifle this last cry—after having pointed it out. The House will remember the interesting spectacle given us when the hon. member for Montreal East (Mr. Coursol), answering the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Rinfret), called his attention, in the teeth of his own assertions, to what the leader of the Liberal party in the Province of Quebec had said, not only in this House, but also before the Special Committee organized by it. To the blow struck by the hon. member for Montreal East (Mr. Coursol), the organ of the Liberal Party in the Province of Quebec has answered, and what does it say? This is what we read in the *Electeur* of the 10th March, 1882:

"... Mr. Coursol recalled to the memory of the House that Mr. Rinfret did not profess the same principles as Mr. Joly with regard to the Tariff. He represented Mr. Joly as a full-fledged protectionist. Now, it is true that in 1872, Mr. Joly came forward in favor of reconstructing the Tariff as a protective basis. But there is a wide difference between what was proposed in 1872 and the present Tariff. What was asked for then, was the free entry of raw material used in manufactures. And again, we asked for the conclusion of commercial treaties with all countries to enable us to dispose of our manufactured articles. If Mr. Tilley had proposed to the House a Tariff such as the one sought for by Mr. Joly, I have not the slightest doubt that the Liberal party would have adopted it with a few restrictions. The Hon. Mr. Joly never pronounced for a Tariff of favoritism and of monopolies like the one we have to-day. Besides, those who are acquainted with the rectitude of mind and the spirit of justice of that distinguished man, know that he is totally opposed to the flagrant injustice of the National Policy, and to the heavy taxation with which are burdened the working and agricultural classes of the country."

Such, Mr. Speaker, is the answer of the Liberal organ of the Province of Quebec. And yet we have more to show than what the hon. member for Montreal East (Mr. Coursol) pointed out to this House. We have authentic declarations; we possess a letter, signed by the Hon. Mr. Joly himself, and to which I desire to call the attention of hon. members. Ten years ago, Mr. Speaker, on the 27th January, 1872, a few citizens of Quebec met in the Salle du Patronage. Their number was small, but their ambition was great. There were there, elbowing one another in a room, the noisy celebrities of an ancient and dying party, young recruits, future commanders of the party that was to arise, and there was also, one need not be surprised at the fact, a corporal's guard of those discontented souls whose hopes had never been realized; they are the malcontents who are known everywhere and in every age. The meeting was opened with Mr. Joly in the chair, Mr. F. Langelier acting as secretary. The papers of the time have preserved for us the report of what took place at that memorable sitting. The first thing done was the forming of a committee of some

twenty members for the Quebec District; resolutions were then passed, speeches were made, and the policy of the new party clearly defined and notified to the country. Mr. C. A. Pelletier, who is to-day a Senator, proposed that as a panacea to the then existing state of affairs, the following reforms should be adopted: hence sprung into life there and then the programme of the national party. I do not intend to give it to you in detail, but there are two clauses of it to which I wish to call the special attention of this honorable House. The programme embodied in its clauses the line of conduct to be followed by the new party not only with regard to the Province of Quebec, but with regard to the whole Dominion. The programme was divided into two parts. There were clauses affecting principally the Province of Quebec, whilst others were to govern the Dominion. With regard to those affecting the interests of the Province of Quebec, I will call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the thirteenth clause of the programme, for I shall have to invoke it in support of certain arguments of which I am about to make use in favor of the increase of the national debt. This thirteenth clause reads as follows: "The Dominion to pay that portion of Canada's debt charged to Quebec and Ontario." With regard to what specially concerns the interests of the Dominion, there is clause 7, which states that "the national party will devote all its forces to obtain for us the absolute right of negotiating ourselves our treaties of commerce with other countries;" but, Mr. Speaker, that programme did not satisfy the ardent spirits of the members of our national party of that period. Speeches were made, and on that occasion, the leaders of the so-called national party thought the opportunity a favorable one to let the country know their views on the position of the affairs in the country. I have taken the trouble of collecting the opinions of the principal leaders of the party. There is, for instance, the opinion of Senator Pelletier. What did he say on the 7th March, 1872, at a second meeting called to approve of and confirm the proceedings of the first one? He said:

"Let us rather take into consideration the influence which keeps us at such a distance from the promised prosperity. As is shown by the resolution which I hold in my hand, we have not sufficient markets for disposing of our products. The manufactures, the different branches of industry which we could develop to such advantage, do not enjoy the necessary protection. Our country has immense advantages and yet it is the most backward country in America, owing to the want of encouragement given to manufactures, and the scarcity of markets for the sale of our products."

Thus, Mr. Speaker, in the opinion of Senator Pelletier, there were two causes to which we might attribute the languishing state of affairs throughout the country: in the first place, the dearth of markets; and secondly, the lack of protection for our manufacturing industries. In those days all the speakers who followed Mr. Pelletier confirmed the opinion of the hon. Senator; and this is the resolution presented at the time by the Hon. Luc Letellier de St. Just, which resolution was seconded by half-a-dozen of his most devoted partisans:

"5th. In order to ensure the development of agriculture, commerce, and industry in our country, to bring home our fellow-countrymen, to attract immigration, it is necessary that we should have every facility to help our manufactures to contend with foreign competition and to open new markets for our products; and this is only to be attained by our being allowed to determine ourselves our commercial relations with other countries."

That motion was unanimously carried. But not only is this the opinion expressed by these hon. gentlemen on the 27th January and the 7th March, 1872, but a short time before the leader of the Liberal party in this House, the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier), had the opportunity of making public his views on the question; and on the 9th November, 1871, at the time when the counties of Drummond and Arthabaska had chosen him as its representative, he said on the debate upon the Address:

"The principal cause of the evil from which we are suffering is, that up to the present time the production of the country has not equalled