

purpose. All trade reports indicated an improved commercial condition in Canada; in fact, every evidence pointed to the fact, in the most clear and unmistakable manner, that Canada was merging from the wave of depression that has overspread the country for some little time. But what will be the effect of this announcement? The capitalists who have been waiting to know what was to be the fiscal policy of Canada, as to which party was to triumph, in order to decide whether they would invest capital and employ labour, north or south of the boundary line, according as to whether Canadian industries were to continue to enjoy protection, or whether there was to be free trade, will be paralyzed in their action, and, indeed, there is not a business man in this Dominion who is not vitally interested in knowing as early as possible what is to be the fate of this country. Under these circumstances, I fear that while there was no ground, under the policy of hon. gentlemen opposite, for calling Parliament together, because they have proved quite equal to getting supplies without any of our weak assistance, there was and there is reason why the Government should state its trade policy at the earliest day, ay, before this House rises. It is due, not to hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, but it is due to the people of Canada, it is due to every enterprise in our country that they should know at the earliest hour possible what is to be the fate of this country, and govern themselves accordingly. Any decision is better, in my judgment, than no decision, because it was a state of undecision that produced such widespread disaster so graphically depicted by the pen of Mr. Wells, in the United States, and which no Canadian who has the interest of the country at heart, desires to see in this Dominion. Under these circumstances, I would even at this late hour implore the hon. gentleman and his colleagues, in the interest of the country, to let our industries know something as to what is to be their fate. Take the great coal mining industry of Nova Scotia, which has grown up under the fostering protection of the policy of the Liberal-Conservative party. It is a question of life and death with those engaged in it whether hon. gentlemen opposite intend to do in this instance what they have pledged themselves solemnly to do. They have pledged themselves solemnly to make coal free, and to make iron free. I wonder how they are going to obtain the consent of the Minister of Justice to that policy. Hon. gentlemen opposite are aware that my iron policy, as it is called, was branded in very opprobrious terms by hon. gentlemen opposite, as a system of monstrous protection, as one of monstrous bounties. But the Prime Minister of Ontario did not think I had gone far enough, and he took money out of the treasury of the province to increase the bounty. We

want to know under which king we shall serve. We want to know whether the policy of the Minister of Justice at the other end of the building or the policy of the Prime Minister is to prevail. We want to know whether those great industries which have grown up, and which occupy an important position in the maritime provinces are to be sacrificed or not, and the fact that hon. gentlemen opposite are unable to make their arrangements until nine months ahead is one of a most serious character. A great many manufacturers of this country, men who have large amounts of capital invested, naturally want to know whether their industries are to live or die, and I therefore say that, in my judgment, the Prime Minister would have been quite warranted in calling Parliament for so important a purpose as disclosing frankly and fully to the people what they had to hope for or what they had to fear, instead of bringing us together for what—with these Governor General's warrants on the table—appears to have been very inadequate cause. All I can say is this. I trust the hon. gentleman will go forward on the line on which he has taken such advanced steps during the campaign. I hope the hon. gentleman will throw behind him all that wild free trade rhodomontane in which he was in the habit of indulging and amusing the country, and that he will advance in the direction of giving the industries of Canada that protection which is necessary to allow them to live and flourish. If the hon. gentleman will do that, I can assure him that instead of receiving the opposition of hon. members on this side of the House, he will find us prepared to go heart and hand with him in any measure that is calculated to maintain the progress and prosperity of the country in connection with which we believe necessary protection to our great industries is absolutely indispensable.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier). Mr. Speaker, I have assuredly no fault to find with the speech to which we have just had the pleasure of listening, nor is it my intention to offer any criticism upon it. On the whole, it was a moderate speech, and if we remember the source from which it came, I think it was a very moderate speech, indeed. True, Sir, there was throughout it, from the first to the last syllable, a tone of disappointment and bitterness; but with this I find no fault, and indulge in no criticism. I waive it in deference to the feelings of a man who, having abandoned a high and honourable position in the service of the country for the more noble and higher ambition of restoring the wrecked fortunes of his party, and having failed in the task, has not yet recovered from the surprise and the shock, that, like Cæsar, he came and saw, but, unlike Cæsar, he did not conquer. It is manifest from the tone of the speech of the hon. gentleman that he