

class of the community in the depth of winter, and it is absolutely sectional, pressing heavily on the people of Ontario, and not at all on the great mass of the people in the other provinces. While in that province it is a standing grievance, it is a most doubtful benefit to Nova Scotia.

And the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries declared :

Protection is false and delusive, and if the coal industry cannot live without being propped up by protection, then we say it is as well for the country that the coal industry should go.

Had not Mr. Hardy proper ground for believing that, under those pledges, he was perfectly right in saying to the people of Brantford, on the eve of one of the most strongly contested elections they ever had : Elect our man, support our party, and coal will be free ; \$800,000 of a tax will be taken off, which the Toronto "Globe" says is nearly all paid by Ontario.

To-day what have we ? These gentlemen have not only not taken off the duty on this necessary of life but have commissioned their own man to declare that not only will he keep the duty on coal which is now dutiable, but that, under certain contingencies, he will add a duty on anthracite coal, of which one and a half million of tons are brought into the country yearly and are consumed mostly by the farmers of the country, especially of Ontario. But coal has not been reduced by these gentlemen who pledged themselves to reduce it, and who to-day, when in power, sit calmly there and see their broken pledges brought before them and feel within their inmost hearts that they have not kept faith with the people who trusted them and voted for them on the pledges they gave.

And rice—how shall I harrow up the soul of my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright) by bringing up this matter of rice ? 17½ per cent was on the uncleaned, and I brought that duty up to three-tenths of a cent, and kept the protection on the finished article the same as it was, and I received Hail Columbia from my hon. friend. It was an outrage that the food of the poor people should be taxed 1¼ cents. Why is it taxed now ? I asked that question of the hon. Minister of Finance, and he replied : We must have revenue. Why, that is what I said in 1894. I was getting more revenue by bringing it up from 17½ per cent to three-tenths of a cent, and the answer of my hon. friend—it is down in the "Hansard"—was : I can show you how you will get much more revenue than that—put a lower duty on the cleaned rice ; so many millions of pounds are used in the country, you will get cheap food for the people and four or five times the revenue. Does not the same answer apply to-day, or is a principle just three days old no longer a principle ? Now, I come for a moment to that second phase of the question, but before I touch that, I wish

to read to you Resolution No. 16, which is as follows :—

That whenever it shall appear to the satisfaction of the Governor in Council that as respects any article of commerce there exists any trust, combination, association or agreement of any kind among the manufacturers of such article, or the dealers therein, or any portion of them, to enhance the price of such article or in any other way to unduly promote the advantage of such manufacturers or dealers at the expense of the consumers, and that such disadvantage to the consumer is facilitated by the customs duty imposed on a like article, when imported, then the Governor in Council shall place such article on the free list, or so reduce the duty on it, as to give to the public the benefit of reasonable competition in such article.

That is a power which, I humbly submit, no Government ought to ask in its own interests, in the interests of clean and pure Government, in the interests of satisfactory justice in this country. Who is to be the judge ? A partisan body of men are to be the judges in each case. Should they put themselves in that position ? Now, I am not arguing from any partisan point of view.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Of course not.

Mr. FOSTER. There are some hon. gentlemen, I suppose, who will not believe me, but I make the assertion conscious of its truth. I, as a member of the Government, would not have that power put in my hands because it is not a proper power for the peace of a Government, for the good of a Government, or its standing in the country. The very moment the Government begin to work on that, what happens ? Here is a large manufacturing industry which is run by persons who are of an opposite political faith from the Cabinet which sits as the judge. Now, we may have all the faith possible in human nature, but we know that there is partisanship in Canada as between two parties, and strong partisanship. And what is the first effect of that ? It is that a man who is charged feels that he is going before a prejudiced jury or a prejudiced judge, and that is not well for the body politic and the commonwealth. There is in it, if the Cabinet is willing to be corrupt, the most powerful engine for corruption that could possibly be devised. The simple threat by an unprincipled member of the Government to a large corporation that he is pretty well convinced that they are in a combine and that it had better be settled, would have a magic effect. No Government ought to court that power, and no Government ought to be given that power. I am just as strongly opposed to wrong combines as any man. And I will tell hon. gentlemen opposite, and they must know it when they look into the matter from a business point of view, that it is a pretty difficult thing to judge when a combine is really a combine. The ways of business are wonderfully complicated.