

country with these words on his lips and asks the country to give him power to put these words upon the Statute-book, forgets the words and does not put them on the Statute-book, and then justifies himself, not upon principle, but upon simple party expediency, that man ought not to look again into the face of the electorate of Canada. He goes on :

I say that it is vicious in principle. I want to know—and I put the question so as to be heard throughout the length and breadth of this country—

That is where we want it to be heard—

—by virtue of what principle will you tax a man to enrich his neighbour?

Would the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), if he were here, rise up and answer this question : By what principle do you tax the poor farmer who was to warm himself by the heat of anthracite coal, that tax being levied in order to increase the the gains of—according to Mr. Hardy—a foreign monopoly in the province of Nova Scotia ?

By virtue of what principle will you tax the farmer in order to give work to the working-man? On what principle will you tax the workingman in order to give better prices to the farmer?

Now, if there is any logical conclusion from that, it is that the principle of protection as the hon. gentleman stated, is vicious and ought not to be allowed as the basis of the policy of this country. But he goes further :

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I submit to your judgment, that the servile copy of the American system which has been brought amongst us by the leaders of the Conservative party, is, like its prototype, a fraud and a robbery, and I call upon you, one and all, to pronounce at once and give your emphatic support to the proposition that we shall never rest until we have wiped away from our system that fraud and robbery under which Canadians suffer.

Nine months have gone by since the present Government came into power. Has my hon. friend (Mr. Laurier) been resting? He proceeds :

I submit to you, therefore, that the system of protection which is maintained by the Government, that is to say, of levying tribute upon the people, not for the legitimate expenses of government, but for a private and privileged class, should be condemned without qualification. Let it be well understood that from this moment we have a distinct issue with the party in power. Their ideal is protection; our ideal is free trade. Their immediate object is protection; ours a tariff for revenue only. Upon this issue we engage the battle from this moment forward, and I ask you once more, never to desist until we have achieved victory, until we have freed this country from the incubus which has been weighing it down for fifteen long years.

Now, Sir, I cannot leave these quotations without giving one from that sturdy champion of free trade, from that whiskered

knight of unceasing and irrevocable enmity and opposition to the principle of protection, the gallant gentleman who does not happen to be in his seat this afternoon, who, I have no doubt, at this moment suffers other pains than those rheumatic pains for treatment for which he has to go off to the springs in New York—pains of conscience that he who denounced the coal tax in all its moods and tenses over and over again from his seat in this House, has to remain a member of the Government and sit alongside a gentleman who rises and in his very face and eyes declares that the Government are going to keep the duty upon coal :

However, Sir, these opportunities are gone, and it is our duty now to face the situation as best we may, and I believe, with Mr. Laurier, that the first duty—

You see he says that this is the first duty, not that the Franchise Bill is the first—

—the first duty of the Reform party, the duty which lies next at hand, the duty which is most clearly within their power to perform, is at once and completely to reform the tariff of this country, to reduce it to a revenue basis, to see that no money from this time forward shall, so far as we can prevent it, be taken out of the pockets of the people for any other purpose than for the legitimate needs of the community. Gentlemen, as regards protection, I may say at once that I think that no man who has taken the trouble to examine the working of the protective system, will fail to endorse the statement I make, that liberty and protection are a contradiction in terms.

You can have no true liberty under a protective system; you can have no true liberty under a system the function of which is to create a privileged class and to concentrate an undue proportion of the wealth of the community in the hands of a few individuals. I contend that protection, besides being the cause of the worst political corruption, is the deadly foe of every Liberal who desires to see his country a free country.

Now I am not going to take up the time of the House much longer. I can quote from all the present members of the Government; but I wish just now to read a short quotation from the platform which was introduced by the present Minister of Finance, at that time the leader of the Government of Nova Scotia, the Hon. Mr. Fielding, who was, I believe, the chairman of that committee, and who reported the resolutions. The resolutions are long, and this one upon the tariff question needs only that I read one or two sentences of it to show its drift :

The Tariff.—We, the Liberal party of Canada, in convention assembled, declare :

That the customs tariff of the Dominion should be based, not as it is now, upon the protective principle, but upon the requirements of the public service.

And so on, and so on, which brings in unnumbered evils. Then it goes on :

The issue between the two political parties on this question is now clearly defined.