

Association of South Bruce for permission to publish the Speeches lately delivered by me in your County.

I could have wished they had been more worthy of the compliment that has been paid me in desiring their publication. At the same time I shall be glad to see them widely disseminated. I have examined into the administration of public affairs, especially of the financial affairs of the Dominion, and I should like the result of that examination, as disclosed during my tour in Bruce, to be read not only by every resident in my old constituency but by every Canadian.

A National Policy for Canada being the chief question of the day, the one on which both political parties challenge discussion—although I speak only for myself—I shall be well pleased to have the views which I enunciated to my old constituents placed before the country at large.

Unless my unimportance in the State protects me, I shall probably be accused of having abandoned my free trade principles. Such an accusation would be unjust. I have always been in favor of free trade, but the conditions on which nations trade must necessarily be a matter of arrangement either by treaty or reciprocal legislation. We have been asking our neighbors of the United States for years to enter into a commercial treaty with us in the general direction of free trade, and, so far as the natural productions of the two countries are concerned, on the basis of entire free trade, but they have refused, and, more than refused, they have legislated against our industries. These are patent facts, and shall we, acting like unreasoning, wayward children, neglect and refuse to advance our own prosperity, although we see our neighbors advancing theirs, simply because they will not agree to take common ground with us? Shall we insanely persist in starving ourselves to death because our neighbors refuse to eat with us?

Two statesmen, whose devotion to free trade principles will not be questioned, the present and the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Gladstone, have recently spoken words of much significance in respect to industries which may be unfairly pressed by foreign competition. In reply to a workingmen's deputation asking for protection on behalf of the British sugar refiners against the competition of the bounty-supported French refineries, Sir Stafford Northcote is reported to have said:

"He could assure them that this was a question which had given the Government a great deal of anxiety, and they did not at all wonder at the representations which had been made that day, following up other representations which had from time to time been made.