

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. That remains to be seen.

Mr. BELL (Pictou). This is what was canvassed. I do not say anything about the merits of the case, but I am merely stating, in reply to the very warm statement of the hon. Minister of Finance, the ground upon which his political associates appeal to the county of Pictou for support :

Anthracite coal will not be free, as it was under the late Government, but will have to pay a duty under the Liberal Government.

From the language the hon. gentleman has used and the warmth of his utterances, it will be very difficult for the people of Pictou to know how far in the future they may believe his political friends when they come to that county and try to make the people believe that they are in favour of protection to coal. It may be perhaps that the hon. gentleman on this occasion lost his temper and has not left this point any longer open to misunderstanding or question, because, so far as the Government of Canada is supposed to speak through his mouth, he has taken the strongest ground in favour of the policy which in the past was supposed to be the policy of the Liberal party, namely, the policy of free trade. He has advanced one or two strong arguments used by free traders, but what has the course of the Government been ? Has it been consistent with the arguments used by the hon. gentleman this afternoon ? He used the familiar argument of the free trader that every attempt by means of protection to develop any particular interest is a diversion in a particular direction of the general strength of the country and a dangerous and delusive system. He went on to argue that protection induced the people to bend their energies and devote their attention to work in which they cannot engage to the best advantage. But how far can we believe the hon. gentleman ? If these are his sentiments, they are evidently sentiments which he can change to suit the occasion. They are certainly not the sentiments which guided the Government in the framing of the tariff, because, as has already been pointed out over and over again, no matter what may be the professions of the hon. gentleman and his friends, their tariff, taking their main schedule, is a protective tariff. It does go out of its way to protect certain industries. It is not a revenue but a protective tariff, because it provides for the strengthening and supporting of certain industries in this country, and therefore makes an exception in their favour. The most conclusive evidence of this is the fact that after the Government got through with the amended tariff, we found that that tariff was still more in the direction of protection than the tariff first brought down. The Government did not move in the direction of free trade or a revenue tariff, but they did that which I

believe the interests of the country required. Judging them by the tariff they have submitted, they do not believe one word of the principles which the hon. Minister of Finance has just enunciated, but acted in the opposite direction. They moved in the direction of assisting the industries of the country. I am sure that my hon. colleague (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) said distinctly, what I repeat, that he would support the Government in protecting our industries, and would vote as readily for protection coming from that side as coming from this, and so would I. I believe the Government would have acted wisely if they had not touched the old tariff at all, and refrained from entering upon the dangerous process of touching any single part of the intricate and highly organized system of protection which it had taken eighteen years to bring up to its late state of perfection. If the Government had desired to affirm the principle of free trade by their preferential clause, they might just as well have continued the old tariff and have tacked on to it their preferential clause 16, as to have submitted this new tariff with the addition of that clause. Their present tariff is almost identical with the one they found in existence when they took office. It differs in some respects, and in every one of these it is a poorer tariff than the one which the Government professed to improve. The proof of this lies in the fact that no sooner were the provisions of the tariff they first submitted made known, then gentlemen from all parts of Canada, delegations representing trade interests from every section, came to Ottawa and vigorously represented that the changes made were imperilling the existence of our national industries. What did the Government do in view of these representations ? Did the hon. Finance Minister impress upon them his views regarding free trade ? Did he address to them the argument he has just now submitted to the House ? Did he say to them : Gentlemen, you are entirely mistaken, you are engaged in industries which are not native to Canada, which cannot be maintained successfully in Canada, give up the manufacture of carriages and steel springs and devote yourselves to agriculture in which the province of Ontario must always take the lead ? Give up making carriages, springs and axles and devote yourselves to the raising of wheat, and the production of dairy products, and the feeding of cattle. Not at all. He extended to these men the protection they asked for. There are various ways in which protection can be given. It may be given by restoring the duties taken off or by increasing them if necessary. What we complain of is that to those industries in Ontario which were threatened, he gave protection, not by restoring the tariff to a point that would be really serviceable, but by giving them raw material free or nearly free ; and in order to do that, he imperilled, and I fear