

In the course of an excellent speech on the budget the other evening the hon. member for Brome (Mr. McMaster) asked whether it would not be better for the coal industry of Nova Scotia to have reciprocity in coal with the United States and seek in the New England states a market for our coal. Of course, in order to have reciprocity in coal with the United States all we have to do is to take off the duty on the United States coal. These are the reasons I would suggest as making it quite impossible for the Nova Scotia coal operator to sell his coal in the New England market at the present time: The coal trade of Boston and New England has in recent years been revolutionized by important developments in the mining and transportation of coal. The conditions which formerly existed have entirely changed and the ability of the Nova Scotia collieries to find a market there has steadily decreased. Developments have been general but are most marked in the West Virginia coal-fields whose products reach the seaboard at about the same distance from Boston as Louisburg. By the construction and equipment of railways, steamers, loading and discharging plants and other transportation facilities of the most modern and economical type, at an enormous cost, the West Virginia mines have gained a strong hold on the New England market. These developments still continue and the cost of production and transportation may be further lessened. The consolidation of the New England railways has also affected the situation. Their enormous trade of 5,000,000 tons a year all goes into American channels, and so far as the supply of coal by rail is concerned, their influence cannot but be entirely in favour of American coal. There can be no assurance of permanence in any arrangements for reciprocity which would be dependent on the attitude of congress and might change at every presidential election. Lack of permanence would affect the installation of facilities for handling coal, without which the Nova Scotia collieries could not hope to enter the New England market. Wharves, discharging plants and railway connections would involve a heavy investment of capital, which would be imprudent under a terminable arrangement, even if other conditions justified it. It must be expected that American competitors would join with the railways and others to hold the home market: such an alliance would be more effective now than at any time in the history of the trade. The mere removal of the duty would not place us on equal terms with the United States. Our product would have to

[Mr. Kyte.]

compete in a foreign market, with everyone who could be moved by patriotic local or interested motives against us. The cost of mining in the United States as compared with that in Nova Scotia is much lower; their standard of living in Nova Scotia is higher and the provisions for their safety and comfort are far beyond what is customary in the United States. The mining laws of Nova Scotia are as advanced in this respect as those of any country in the world, and it costs the coal companies of the province very much more money to operate their mines owing to this higher cost than it does in the United States. These are the reasons why it is not possible for us to put our coal in the New England market at the present time. As I pointed out a moment ago, any reciprocity arrangement would be only temporary because it might be abrogated at any presidential election, and if the coal companies were to establish proper landing facilities for their coal in the New England cities it would involve an enormous expenditure for that development, which expenditure would be lost as soon as the reciprocity arrangement was terminated.

Now, Sir, I have no desire to say anything further upon that subject. I intended to point out that high protection does not suit Nova Scotia; as a matter of fact there is a very decided and unanimous revolt in the province against any high tariff. In the days of Sir John A. Macdonald, his policy and the policy for which the Conservative party stood all over Canada was epitomized in the magical letters, N.P.; they were the symbol, crest and slogan of the predecessors of hon. gentlemen opposite. But in one important province at least at the present time N.P. stands for "No party." Down in Nova Scotia, in preparation for the provincial election which is now imminent, the local Conservatives have disassociated themselves entirely from the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Meighen), they have thrown the traditional policies of the Conservative party overboard into the swirling current as so much useless and dangerous dunnage in their frantic effort to reach the snug harbour of office. Their battle cry is "The no party forever!"

Having disposed of the tariff in so far as I have had time to deal with it, I purpose discussing one other subject before I resume my seat. A few days ago when the hon. member for Fort William and Rainy River (Mr. Manion) spoke on the budget he went out of his way to make an attack on the hon. member for Last Mountain (Mr. Johnston) on his appointment as a commissioner