

I think Mr. Cobden would be disappointed if to-day he came to this country looking for free traders to the backbone. Free traders of that description are very scarce, and I am glad for the sake of the country it is so. Free trade like universal peace is a very beautiful and grand and glorious ideal when it works, but the nation that throws away its tariffs before the dawn of universal free trade is about as foolish as the nation that would throw away its guns and ammunition before daybreak on the millenium morning. I am not a free trader; I never was a free trader, and I never will be a free trader. I controlled the first newspaper that advocated protection and the National Policy in Toronto, and I used all my influence in favour of the National Policy, and I am not ashamed to stand on this floor to-night, in this House of Commons, and proclaim my allegiance to the National Policy, and my cheerful acceptance of the leadership of the hon. the leader of the Opposition—on this question.

I entered this Parliament a pledged supporter of the Conservative trade policy, and in view of the character of the trade proposals of the Government, I am not in doubt where to look for opponents of the Conservative trade policy. The leader of the Opposition has been robbed of his clothes by the Government but he still retains the principles of protection, and it is my duty to follow these principles, clothes or no clothes. The Liberal party is half converted to the principles of protection. For the country's sake I rejoice that the Government is half-seas over on the voyage to protection, but the Opposition is sound in the faith, and my place is with those who stand fast by protection for the country's sake. The Opposition is the mother of protection and loves the policy for its own sake; the Government is a sort of wet nurse that takes protection and suckles it in order to earn a living for its party.

Believers in the National Policy must rejoice, they ought rejoice, to see that the system to which they have pinned their faith is so strong and so interwoven with the highest and best interests of Canada, that it defies immediate attack. I admit that some precious features of the National Policy have been spared; but at the same time I confess to an uneasy feeling that there is too much free trade and too little protection in this tariff. I believe that the Government's gradual attack on the National Policy is the only style of attack that is dangerous to the protective principle. Supposing that a Liberal Government really wanted to destroy protection, have they not taken the best and the surest road to the end? It would have been folly for them to begin the work of establishing a revenue tariff by a revolution. They are smart enough not to want to dally with a catastrophe. A policy of sweeping change would have brought about a panic, and this panic would have

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discredited the Government. Thus public feeling would have been aroused, and a discredited Government would have perished in the ruins of its tariff policy, and all hope of a revenue tariff would have been destroyed. As it is, the Government lulls public sentiment with a fair show of protective items in this tariff, and sooner or later the country may be awakened by changes which will bring us very near to the basis of a revenue tariff. That prospect may not be terrifying to a free-trader. But I am not a free-trader. Neither am I a revenue tariff man. I am a sincere and convinced protectionist, and I recognize in the Government an enemy to my principles, an enemy all the more dangerous because in this instance it is long-headed and far seeing in its methods. Protection had nothing whatever to fear from any party that would attack it after the manner of a bull in a china shop. It is a much harder fight when the friends of protection have to meet an enemy that lays siege to the citadel which it could not take by assault. The citadel of protection was abandoned to its enemies by the folly of its friends and the party that climbed in over the ruins of the last Government expected to destroy the fortress which its orators had been cursing for eighteen long years. Well, the fortress is not destroyed, but the enemies of protection are inside the breast-works. Some of our friends complain that the Liberal party took a contract to pull down protection, and are merely scribbling free trade maxims on the walls of the citadel which it gained by false pretences. The Government has marred the perfect beauty of the National Policy; but we are told that a high tariff still shelters some of our industries, and that the Government has placed itself in a position to profit by those national impulses created by the impending tariff of the United States. If this new tariff were all that the protective principle had to fear from the Liberal party, I could sympathise with my hon. friends on this side of the House on the loss of their clothes—I would be keenly sensitive to the loss of those clothes. It is chilly over here; I am beginning to feel cold myself. If this question were merely whether the country should permit the Opposition to be robbed of its clothes, I would be willing that the Government should borrow our garments. Al! I would ask is that the Government should wear those principles as a livery in the service of the country, and not as a disguise at a sort of political masquerade. Surely it is better that the Government should borrow our garments rather than altogether destroy the industries which feed and clothe so many of our countrymen.

Mr. McMULLEN moved the adjournment of the debate.

Motion agreed to, and debate adjourned.