

men out of office and put their own followers and partisans in, can they hold against that infinitely greater rush from the back benches, aye, and from benches very close up to the front benches, which sees millions in the public works and contracts of this country, and which is already organized and coming from near and far to exploit the public treasury? Can they hold themselves against that, and keep down the expenditure and keep down the public debt? Their actions so far say, no; their actions hereafter will, I believe, as emphatically say, no.

Now, Sir, leaving the financial side of the question, let us go a step further and ask, with reference to this tariff presentment which we had yesterday: Have they kept their pledges? Did they make any pledges when in Opposition, and when canvassing the electorate?

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hardly. No, no.

Mr. FOSTER. Did they make any explicit promise?

Mr. SOMERVILLE. We promised to turn you out.

Mr. FOSTER. My hon. friend has struck the key; he strikes it true and straight every time; he says "We promised to turn you out." That was their policy; that is as much as they care, so far as the country is concerned; and it was well summed up by my hon. friend the Premier in the early part of this session, when we put his pledges right before his face and eyes, and he saw them, and saw that he had broken them, he had no other retort than to say: "Well, we are on this side, and you are on that; we are in, and you are out."

Mr. LANDERKIN. That is what the country wanted.

Mr. FOSTER. My hon. friend struck the key, and I can depend on his doing that every time. The outs wanted to get in—that was all. Did they make any promise with reference to the tariff? Had they any principle on which they declared they would revise it? Did they in explicit English words say what they were going to do?

An hon. MEMBER. They said it in French.

Mr. FOSTER. I believe they said it in both languages. My hon. friends opposite will say that I am going to be tedious if I am going to read some of those pledges; but my public duty impels me so strongly that I must brave even their displeasure for about half an hour.

Mr. LANDERKIN. Read the prohibition pledge.

Mr. FOSTER. Well, I never heard anything more appropriate than that piteous request of my hon. friend. He knows himself better than I do, and out of the depths of his tempted heart there comes the piteous beseechment: "Read the pledge to me."

If my hon. friend, after the sitting of the House, will come into a private room with me and tell me all his necessities and temptations, I will administer the pledge.

Mr. LANDERKIN. I am afraid you have lost the password, and could not take me outside.

Mr. FOSTER. I never had that password; mine was another one. These pledges, Sir, are found in the sayings of prominent members of the party outside of the Premier as well as in those of the Premier himself. The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright), in 1890, declared:

I say, our protective system was a huge mistake, in so far as it was honest at all,—

Now, I want to pin my hon. friend. They have adopted our tariff, and I presume it is honest. So he has no leg to stand on even there.

—and in so far as it was not honest, it was a huge scheme of robbery. A small ring, clique of combiners and protected manufacturers, have, as I have told you, been permitted for years past to make a prey and plunder of the people of Canada.

Again, he said:

I stand by the declaration I have made, that protection is nothing more or less than deliberate, legalized and organized robbery; and, more than that, if you do not stamp it out,—

Is he stamping it out?

—it is the very high road to political slavery first, and industrial slavery afterwards.

Here we go, on that high-road, under the leadership of my hon. friend himself, who had adopted nine-tenths of the high protective tariff. He declares:

Our policy, from first to last, has been to destroy the villainous system of protection by free trade, revenue tariff, or continental free trade.

But it is a new doctrine that the hon. gentleman is going to destroy it by giving it a dose of itself. He says again:

They demand our policy. Well, Sir, they shall have our policy, and here I believe I speak for my hon. friends beside me. Our policy is death to protection and war to the knife to corruption.

Mr. LANDERKIN. Hear, hear.

Mr. FOSTER. I knew my hon. friend would strike the key again. My hon. friend joined protection and corruption together; where are they to-day?

Sir, we strike, and we will strike, for liberty and freedom from this system of protective taxation; and I tell hon. gentlemen, that we will not rest until the slavery that has been imposed upon us has become a thing of the past, and until Canadians are as free as Canadians ought to be free, to make the most they can of the opportunity God has given them.

Again:

Our policy, from first to last, has been to destroy this villainous system of protection which has been grinding out the vitals of this country.