

POOR DOCUMENT

Mr. Irvine's Speech.

(Abridged from Hazard.)
Mr. Irvine.—Although I do not consider I possess less courage than any other man, I confess I am entirely unaccustomed to guerrilla warfare. I admit that my grammar is not very good and that my arithmetic is not such that I can apply it to some of the calculations presented to this House. I have listened with a great deal of pain and some pleasure to the speeches delivered during the debate. I have listened with pain to the gentlemen trying to prove the most absurd propositions on record. I confess that I like a man from the Lower Provinces better than a man from Ontario; but I would like, when Maritime Province members rise to the intellectual standard of the House that they should neither deceive the people or pursue a course of absurd reasoning. It was with pain that I listened to the statement of an hon. gentleman occupying two hours in delivering, that the people of Ontario were paying half for coal because they were paying half a dollar per ton duty. My arithmetic does not answer in that particular. I shall address myself to the discussion of the National Policy. I am quite an humble man; I belong to a very small party in this House, but, if I am informed correctly, to a large party in the country. I am a practical farmer, not a gentleman farmer, who has servants near him to whom he can say "come and go," but I issue orders and I assist in executing them. I am one of those who, according to hon. gentlemen opposite, have been enriched by having taxes heaped upon them. I can speak from practical experience, and one ounce of such is worth a pound of theory such as is addressed to the House. I am pleased to say I belong to the party to which I have always belonged, the great Liberal party of Canada, which has given to this country all she possesses in the shape of liberty, religion and civil. I am glad also to think that I have a love and respect for the Old Country, and when the Liberal party of Canada and the Old Country are compared, they will be found to be very closely allied. The Liberal party in the old land is always the friend of the poor man; the Tory party, prior to Sir Robert Peel and the repeal of the Corn Laws, was the friend of the land monopolists. The Peelites and Liberals were friends of the poor, and in this country the Liberal party has always been a friend to the poor, while the Tories, like the Tory party in England, are supported by the monopolists. I am glad to say that I have the honor of following a leader in this House against whom, after sitting in this House a month, the worst thing that can be charged is comprised in the two words "Speak now." (Cheers.) I am gratified also that the man, whom I love above any other man in Canada, the hon. member for Lunenburg (Mr. Mackenzie), has been followed by his opponents from Dan to Beersheba, and the only charge ever preferred against him—and that charge never stuck to him—was that he had purchased rails, and the price had afterwards fallen. I remember very well in 1848, when I landed in New Brunswick, a boy, that the times were hard. Mr. Irvine then referred to the charges of disloyalty which were made against the Opposition and asked why do they fling this disloyalty cry across the floor? Simply for the reason, that those gentlemen who formed the coalition, including some of the men of New Brunswick that we honored—though we never liked coalitions, we were willing our representatives should assist in consolidating this country into a grand Dominion—in I to their benefit. In order to keep themselves in power they committed acts, which in the eye of the people of Canada, and according to the universal verdict of England, disgraced this country; and in order to get back into power they propounded a theory or policy which we were promised would make everybody rich—farmer, manufacturer and all. Mr. Irvine then spoke of the business in Carleton County in previous years and said, I sold hay lower in 1880—fifty tons at \$5 a ton—lower than ever before. At present, notwithstanding the National Policy, we are not receiving exactly as high prices as some years ago. But I admit that my country is now very prosperous. We have lumbering, and if a man cannot get employment on the New Brunswick side, he can go across to Maine, where there is any amount of work for man and beast. There are no idle men in the County, whatever be their occupation. If that be due to the National Policy, let its friends prove it; I do not think so. With regard to manufacturing interests in New Brunswick, they have always done well. I never knew a manufacturer to fail. We have in Woodstock two iron foundries, whose owners commenced with a little capital and are now reported wealthy. I have it from both proprietors that they were better under the old than under the present Tariff. As far as that is concerned I think it is very plain that the new arrangement has been of no benefit to them. Then there is one thing in reference to the manufacturers that we always laid down in New Brunswick, and that our Government appears to have laid down—that was, that it was unwise for a new country to encourage every class of manufacturers, but that only those should be encouraged which could be carried on successfully.

Another principle laid down was that raw material should be allowed to come in free, so that our manufacturers could compete with others. Another point I wish to dwell upon is this: Before the Union, certain propositions were made to us that I am bound to say the hon. gentlemen who occupy the Treasury benches have not fulfilled. When these propositions were made to us to enter the Union, New Brunswick was under a 12 1/2 per cent. Tariff, and Old Canada was under a 20 per cent. Tariff, and, in order to induce us to enter the Union, they reduced it to 15 per cent. If it was for our interest to reduce the Tariff to 15 per cent. in order to induce us to enter the Union, how can it now be for our advantage to have a Tariff rising to 30 or 40 per cent.? Then I must say this—and I am sorry to say it, I blush to say it—that Canadian statesmen are not exactly the material we thought they were. It is said of English statesmen that they consider their country's honor as their own, but I am sorry to say Canadian statesmen are not so sensitive as that. If they can compass their own ends they are not so very careful of their personal honor. Another point I wish to direct attention to is, that when the statement of this country decided to make such a change in the Tariff, all parties should have been consulted. I am glad to say that I have the honor to belong to a great party in the country—the farmers. (Cheers.) It is said that four-fifths of the people of Canada are farmers, but I am sorry to say there are, less than a dozen farmers in this House. You cannot walk about here without running against manufacturers. This country will soon be ruled by manufacturers and doctors and lawyers. I say, with all due deference to the occupants of the Treasury benches, that a party as influential as we are, who contribute so much to the material prosperity of Canada, who export more than half the products of Canada to the European markets and bring the money back in gold—I say we are entitled to some consideration at the hands of the Government.

If we take the returns of Canada we will find that manufacturers succeeded much better under the Mackenzie Administration than they do now. As far as exports of manufactured goods are concerned they exported nearly, if not quite, three-quarters of a million more in 1878 than in 1881. The exportation of manufactured goods in 1878 amounted to \$4,715,776, and, in 1881, to \$4,042,123, so that the manufacturers made a better showing in 1878 than in 1881. But what I object to in this arrangement is, that the manufacturer has an undue advantage over the farmer. I will explain the farmer's position. He has no home market except for a limited amount of his products. In 1881, the entire exportation was \$35,000,000, of which farm produce amounted to \$44,000,000. The farmer is obliged to go into the broad world to dispose of his produce; he cannot do it at home. Now, I ask you, if every weight should not be thrown off the farmer? I ask you, if he is to run the race successfully, should not every weight be thrown off him? But the gentlemen who occupy the Treasury benches have weighed him down still more instead of taking the weights off him. We have to go to the markets of Europe to sell our produce. There is not an implement the farmer uses on his farm that is not heavily taxed—not one solitary implement. I will take the liberty to read the letter that was read the other day by the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton). It will answer my purpose as well as I did his. It is in reference to the extra duty under the present Tariff on agricultural machines over the duty under the Mackenzie Administration. (Mr. Irvine then read the letter.) I wish to ask hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches if they think that by taxing the raw material of every implement used on the farm they can enable the farmer to work to greater advantage? Previous to this there was a tax upon the tin which the farmer used, but if it was for sealing fish or any purpose like that a rebate was allowed. I ask if the Canadian farmer can compete fairly in the race with other nations in the markets of Europe, if he has to pay more than his share of the revenue of his country? The materials of which implements are made were never taxed before, or, at all events, only to the extent of something like 5 per cent. It is said that we are opposed to the manufacturers, but we never heard that until these hon. gentlemen came into power in 1878. There is no reason why we should oppose the manufacturers. We have natural interests with them, we sell our products and they sell us their goods. But the farmer asks no favors from the Government, he has the common sense to know that the Government cannot give him a market, and that it is only taunting and humbugging him to tell him so. What we object to is that the Government should take the manufacturers under their particular protection, that they should put them in hot houses so that they are afraid to come out for fear the cold blasts of winter may strike them. The farmer, they say, is able to compete in the markets of the world, but the manufacturer is not. As a farmer, I am willing to protect the manufacturer to a reasonable extent, but not to such an extent that the purchaser

of his goods may not have the right to use his own judgment in purchasing goods. I do not think it necessary to give the implement manufacturers of Canada a protection of 30 per cent. I do not mean to say that the manufacturer is made of any such material that he will fold his arms and say: "I am unable to compete with the American manufacturer unless you give me the benefit of a 30 per cent. duty." At all events, if the manufacturer does say so, he is not of the stuff that Britons are made of, because, wherever you find a Briton, he says: "I am able to meet the world." We all know that it was the farmer who had much to do with making this country what it is; who went in and cleared the forest and made the wilderness blossom as the rose and drove the aborigines back, and brought our vast domain into cultivation. We know who should receive a fair kind of protection at the hands of the Government, but who has received insult upon insult and who, instead of being invited to give their opinion when the great change was made in our fiscal system, were treated with silence. I think 30 per cent. is too large a duty on agricultural implements. I think 15 per cent. should be enough and let them have the raw materials free of duty.

Mr. Donville: What would you do with the raw materials free of duty? Would you leave them unprotected?

Mr. Irvine: We will come to that by-and-by. But I would like to know how the farmers are used. It takes the lawyers and doctors of the House to explain anything like that. One of the cries of the Government in 1878 was that Canada should be kept for the Canadians. Well, I believe they are bound to keep Canada for the manufacturers; but what is to be done to secure Canada for the Canadian farmers? Supposing that when the change was made in our fiscal system, a committee of Canadian farmers had been invited to discuss that point and say what protection should be given them. Do you think the first step they would have taken would have been to ask the Government to place a duty of 20 per cent. on our horses? We exported 29,000 horses last year; would a duty of 20 per cent. upon them have put money in our pockets? Last year we exported 62,179 head of cattle, and 354,155 head of sheep. If a practical farmer had been asked to assist us, would he have placed a duty of 20 per cent. on cattle and sheep? Certainly he would not. He would have seen that we imported last year 75,000 barrels of pork; and would not a practical man have said to the Finance Minister, "We do not want you to put a duty on the article we import, namely, pork." But he did not put a duty on that article. The 10 per cent. duty was on before Confederation. No; he insulted us first and humbugged us afterwards. Then, again, he placed 15 cents on barley and 7 1/2 cents on corn. We export barley largely; we exported last year \$20,519 bushels of barley and imported about 7,000,000 bushels of corn, about 4,000,000 bushels being for home consumption. The excuse he gave for putting the light duty on corn was that it was used by the brewers, and he is a great friend of the brewers. Everyone knows that a bushel of corn is worth two bushels of oats; and there has not been a year since 1870 in which oats have not ranged 4 or 5 cents a bushel higher in Maine than in New Brunswick. It is taunting and insulting the farmers, pretending that this kind of thing is any protection to them. The Finance Minister talks of retaliating against the United States. It is humiliating to hear him talk such nonsense as to say that this is any retaliation. It is all very well to talk of imbecility, but who is the imbecile? Then I come to the article of wool. The Finance Minister says we export 1,000,500 Canadian wool, and the inference naturally is that we are raising more Canadian wool than we can manufacture. But what is the fact? We import eight million pounds of foreign wool. After this tariff was in operation a great cry was raised that foreign wool was imported by our manufacturers, to the great injury of the Canadian farmers, and he placed three cents a pound on wool duty free, and we are obliged to ship 1,000,500 pounds of our native wool. Now, sir, the farmers of Canada ask that Canada should be for the Canadians, and that you should place the farmers on an equality with the manufacturers. On the wool for a suit of woolen clothes worn by the poor man a duty had to be paid, while the wool for the clothing of the silkstocked fellow is allowed to come in duty free. What can we expect better from the Tories than that? They never were the friends of the poor man; they always pressed him and made him subservient to the rich; and I am sorry that a gentleman whom we took from the apothecary shop should be the enemy of the poor man. (Cheers.)

Sir Leonard Tilley:—He was a good apothecary.

Mr. Irvine proceeded to discuss the effect of the tariff upon cotton and some other articles. He then said:—I have observed with pain and a good deal of indignation that the Hon. Finance Minister has tried within the last two years to make it appear that New Brunswick is paying less per capita than Ontario or Quebec or any other Province in the Dominion—a course of action which I think unworthy of the man, for he should have been the last

man to have done so. But I must thank the hon. Minister of Customs, who came to the rescue. I do not think he came voluntarily. The speech of the hon. member for Brant (Patterson), in which he pointed out that the tariff had not fostered the export of manufactures, and that the exports last year were less than four years ago, forced him to do so. The hon. Minister was driven into a corner, and he did us involuntary justice. I will read, for the edification of the people of New Brunswick, the words used by my hon. friend the Minister of Customs. The hon. Minister said:—

The hon. gentleman knows, and no one knows better, because he has given much attention to the question of export and import, that inter-provincial trade, which has grown up within the last five or six years, is double that which existed a few years ago. Let me give the hon. gentleman a few figures. I think they will show that whereas the exports, accepting the figures he has given, have fallen off on some thirty or forty articles, that inter-provincial trade has increased and quadrupled the total sum. Take, for instance, the returns from Nova Scotia. In 1875-76 the imports into that Province, from foreign countries, were \$14,000,000. If the hon. gentleman will consult the Trade and Navigation Returns, he will find that the imports from foreign countries into that Province have surpassed \$5,000,000 or \$6,000,000. Who have supplied those \$8,000,000 worth of goods, except the manufacturers of Ontario and Quebec, and the farms and dairies of that Province? The same facts exist in regard to the trade of New Brunswick. If hon. members will refer to the imports from foreign countries, they will find that seven or eight years ago, they reached \$10,000,000 or \$12,000,000. During last year they amounted to little more than half that sum. The hon. gentleman knows that the people of New Brunswick consume as much to-day as they did five or six years ago, but that the Province is just as prosperous, and if that be the case, either the goods must be manufactured within the Province or they were received from Ontario or other Provinces of the Dominion, which have entered largely into the production of articles formerly imported from foreign countries.

I thank the hon. Minister of Customs most heartily, and I feel uncommonly grateful to him for having done what the Finance Minister failed to do. When New Brunswick imports \$5,000,000 or \$6,000,000 worth of goods she pays more duty than when she imported \$10,000,000 in 1875, the value of the goods imported for consumption was \$10,949,768, on which a duty was paid of \$1,246,138. In 1881 the value of the imports for home consumption amounted to a little over \$6,000,000, while the duty reached \$1,266,000. And that was done in the face of the fact that it was publicly stated there was to be no increase of the tariff, but merely a re-adjustment.

This reminds me of a man in our Province who was not exactly round, or as they say in Ireland, was half-witted, who, when he saw the hon. Finance Minister spreading his hands and bemoaning what the National Policy had done, said: "Sir Leonard, what have you done to increase the price of spruce logs from \$4 to \$8?" He replied: "The prosperity is due to the National Policy." The National Policy which made spruce logs \$8 in St. John, instead of \$5 or \$4, in a year. We do not know half the virtues or powers of the National Policy.

Sir Albert J. Smith. Did the crowd believe him?

Mr. Irvine: Believe him! Why, the man was half-witted who asked the question. (Cheers and laughter.)

Mr. Ross (West Middlesex). And how much wit had the man who answered it?

Mr. Irvine: You can guess by the answer. (Renewed cheering.) Now, coming to the question of the interests of the farmers, I remember last fall, when the Prime Minister came over from England, the Tory press loudly proclaimed that England was going back to her position before the repeal of the Corn Laws, or to adopt the Fair Trade principle. This press said that the hon. gentleman had set the heather on fire in England too, and that we should have Fair Trade in England as well as in Canada. But there was no great prospect of that event in England. Let us see whether the present Ministers are friends of the farmers. The fair traders in England say they are going to pay all their taxes by putting a 20 per cent. duty on foreign wheat and on lumber, too, all of which according to this they must be paid by Canadians. This is the policy which the Tory press claims that our Prime Minister originated in England. He not only binds down the farmer with clogs and taxes and other obstacles in Canada, but invites the English fair trade party to impose duties on our products when they arrive in England. This policy would not injure the manufacturer, for he is not obliged to go to the outside or English market, for they have the slaves in Canada to impose their goods upon whether good or bad. The English manufacturer does not pretend to sell goods cheaper than any one else, but he fears not to sell them on their merits; but the Canadian manufacturer says to the people, "You must take my goods and pay for my shoddy whether good or bad," and to the lumberman, "You must take your lumber to the English market and bring back the money to spend in such goods as Canadian shoddy." That is the freedom and liberty we are treated to. One class is to be favored, and all the others are to be favored of wood and drawers of water for it. The cry of disloyalty in Nova Scotia and

elsewhere has only lately been raised by the present Government, who have set one class against the other—the manufacturer against the farmer and the laborer. I do not think we are going to cement the bonds of union in a country stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific by any such means. After discussing the promise of the Finance Minister that protection would give a large home market for agricultural produce and showing its fallacy, and the flour duty which he thought would be abolished, Mr. Irvine gave a short sketch of the political career of Sir Leonard Tilley. He closed by saying: But I suppose it is quite enough for me to tell the good this Minister of Finance has done to the Province of New Brunswick when I go back. I desire to say what the gentlemen who occupy the Treasury benches have done for the farmers. They have not placed them on an equal footing with the manufacturers. We do not object to protection, provided we are not taxed too much to pay for our manufactured goods. We are willing our manufacturers should have a reasonable protection—not 35 or 40 per cent. We are willing to buy their goods and unite with them in the work of building up a great country. I have said that under the present Tariff arrangements we have not received justice at the hands of the Government. I have only to conclude by thanking the House for the kindness with which they have received my remarks. This is the first occasion on which I have attempted to address the House, and if it is the last, I am still thankful for the opportunity it thus afforded me. (Loud applause.)

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, March 22.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Committee appointed to investigate the claims of Robert Sinclair, Supervisor of Great Roads for the County of Restigouche, reported through Mr. Ritchie, Chairman, recommending the payment of \$180 to Robert Sinclair, in full of his claim.

Mr. Ryan said he, in 1877, brought the matter under the attention of the Government, in order to induce them to protect the hemlock forests; if the factories were not permitted and tanneries were built as they would give ten times as much employment. The back consumed in an extract factory in a day would employ three men for a year in a tannery. He went on and condemned the selling of the lands in blocks, and said a much larger revenue could be obtained from them by the issue of a different policy. The quantity of bark used in one factory in a year if used in manufacturing leather would give employment to 25,000 men for one day, besides the men who would be employed in peeling and handling the bark.

The Hon. Surveyor General said that this was a direct want of confidence motion and if it was accepted by the House, the Government would have nothing to do but resign their seats. The Government's course in regard to these lands had not been decided upon hastily, but had been more than once calmly and carefully discussed in Council. In considering this subject the Free Grant and Labor Acts must be taken into account, especially the latter, for under this Act all that had to be done was to file a petition in the Crown Lands office and a grant was issued. In this way much land had been robbed of its lumber, and he had of late refused these petitions except in cases where the land applied for was near some settlement. Besides this the Crown Land Surveyor was instructed to be more particular in his work and to report the extent and nature of any clearings and how the land is timbered. And further as no County had sent in so many applications as Kent the Surveyor was sent to examine these lands. He reported that all along the line of the Intercolony in Kent County the land was wholly unfit for settlement, and this was just where these applications had come from. Yet not a word had come from Mr. Sayre then because his constituents were robbing these lands of their timber and bark and pocketing the profits. Was it not wise that a check should be put upon this? He read orders and reports of surveyors showing that the lands in Kent County sold to Messrs. J. J. Miller & Co. were those covered generally by hemlock. They were in separate blocks of 100 acres and 300 and upwards, and of a barren or swampy nature and unfit for cultivation. The petition read by Mr. Sayre he held was the work of Mr. George McLeod, and produced another from that gentleman directly opposed to it. He said that Mr. McLeod had petitioned against the sale of lands to Messrs. J. J. Miller & Co., but he had also, in October, 1881, applied for 3000 acres for himself. The explanation of all this was the jealous feeling entertained by Mr. McLeod for the Messrs. Miller and this resolution was also an outgrowth of it. The sale of lands to Messrs. Miller did not interfere with the lumbering interests of Kent in any way, but had in many respects aided in the settlement of some districts there, and had given employment to many poor men when other work was scarce.

Mr. Willis said that the question was not one of rights between Mr. McLeod and J. J. Miller, but was the policy of the Government in regard to the Crown lands, a wise and good one. He thought it was not, and went on and condemned the policy of the Government.

Mr. Davidson said he knew the lands which had been disposed of to Messrs. J. J. Miller, and they were not fit for settlement or cultivation. He supported the land policy of the Government, and said that their action in this connection was proper, and just such a line as any prudent man of business would have followed in the management of his own affairs.

Mr. Barbic rose, but did not get fairly under way when the debate was adjourned until Friday at 2.30. FRIDAY, March 24.

The House met at 10 o'clock. After routine several bills were advanced