

to the continued confidence of the people in the present Administration, but they know full well, every man of them, that such boasting is simply sound and nothing else. Why, there is not a supporter of the Government who would dare to lay the policy of his party—that hazy, misty, undulating, fluctuating, shifting mass of contradiction, which constitutes the policy of the Conservative party—before the people, unless the people had been in advance gagged, as gagged they were in the last election—yes, gagged, shackled and manacled—gagged, shackled and manacled by iniquitous laws—gagged, shackled and manacled by laws which have mutilated the boundaries of counties so as to swamp the voice of the people therein, by laws which left the preparation of the lists of voters in the hands of the Government, by laws which left the printing of the lists in the hands of the Government, by laws which have allowed the Government to appoint the revising officers of those lists, by laws which allowed the Government to appoint most unblushing partisans to that office, by laws which allowed them to perpetrate the most disgraceful frauds in favour of the Government from whom they have received their appointments. The hon. gentlemen speak of the continued confidence of the country in the Government. That confidence to which they refer is only expressed by the aids of such iniquitous measures as those to which I refer, supplemented by other iniquitous modes of bribing constituencies, worse than ever known in any country, and that is what they call receiving the continued confidence of the people, but they have never received the continued confidence of the people of the country. If the hon. gentleman is sincere in his belief that he had at the late elections the continued confidence of the people of the country, let him repeal these iniquitous Acts,—let him repeal the Gerrymander Act, let him repeal the Franchise Act, and then dissolve Parliament, and we will meet him face to face before the country on even ground, and then I venture to say, his majority of to-day will be wiped out and not even enough will be left to form a corporal's guard. Then again, I ask, why was there a dissolution? The power of dissolution is one which should at all times be sparingly exercised, and should only be exercised for cause. The duration of Parliament is fixed by law, and, while the power to dissolve Parliament is certainly left to the Crown, it is not left to the whim or the caprice of the Crown, but has to be exercised on the advice of the Ministers, and those Ministers are responsible to the people of this country. The reasons which are given to His Excellency, advising him to dissolve Parliament, should be communicated at once to Parliament. That is the spirit of the Constitution; that is the spirit of the British Constitution for which hon. gentlemen opposite profess so much admiration, and to which they profess so much devotion, but they never hesitate to stab it if, by stabbing it, they can gain a party advantage. But I ask, of all the reasons which were urged upon the Governor General to induce him to dissolve Parliament, did we ever hear any reason given to Parliament, did we ever hear any reason coming from the lips of a Minister of the Crown? Never, to this day. It is true that we have had some reference made to it in the Ministerial press. For instance, in the month of February last, the *Montreal Gazette*, one of the leading organs

of the Administration, had this despatch, which was evidently inspired from Ottawa:

"Ottawa, February 2nd.—The Sixth Parliament of Canada is at an end. Acting on the advice of his responsible Ministers, His Excellency the Governor General has been pleased to dissolve the House of Commons and issue his writs for a new Parliament. Nominations will take place on Thursday, February 26, polling on Thursday, March 5. The writs are to be dated February 4, and made returnable on April 25.

"In view of the foregoing important statement the question will naturally be asked, what are the reasons which has induced the Government to appeal to the country at the present time? It is understood that the Dominion Government had, through Her Majesty's Government, made certain proposals to the United States for negotiations looking to an extension of her commerce with that country. The proposals have been submitted to the President for his consideration, and the Canadian Government is of the opinion that if the negotiations are to result in a treaty, which must be ratified by the Parliament of Canada, it is expedient that the Government should be able to deal with a Parliament fresh from the people rather than with a moribund House."

We have some reason to believe, though everything stated here is not true, that the bulk of the statement is true, and that the advice tendered to His Excellency to dissolve Parliament was because the Government desired to obtain power in order to obtain a renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. We have also been favoured with a communication which consists of the correspondence between His Excellency the Governor General and the Imperial authorities, and we find there a document dated the 13th December last, as follows:—

"GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
OTTAWA, 13th Dec., 1890.

"MY LORD.—I have the honour to send to your lordship to-day a telegraphic despatch in cipher of which the following is the substance:

"With reference to my telegram of the 10th inst., the Government is desirous to propose a joint commission, to deal without limitation and to prepare a treaty representing the following subjects:

"(1) Renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854."

But even if the reason urged upon His Excellency for dissolving the existing Parliament was this, we find immediately that there was a change of front, because, a few days afterwards, the hon. gentleman issued a manifesto to the people of Canada, and in that manifesto there is not a word to be found in regard to that reciprocity treaty. I have the manifesto here, and this is the first part of it:—

"To the Electors of Canada:

"GENTLEMEN.—The momentous questions now engaging public attention having, in the opinion of the Ministry, reached that stage when it is desirable that an opportunity should be given to the people of expressing at the polls their views thereon, the Governor General has been advised to terminate the existence of the present House of Commons and to issue writs summoning a new Parliament."

Sir, you will see that not a word from the first to the last, if you read that manifesto through, is used about any conference with regard to obtaining a new reciprocity treaty, how limited soever it might be. What was the reason given to His Excellency for dissolving Parliament? It is stated that it was to negotiate a treaty, and yet, in the manifesto, not a word was said of the treaty, but the whole argument to which the hon. gentleman devoted himself was one of favour of the continuance of the National Policy. The reason for this is clear and obvious. There are two principal classes in the Dominion of Canada. There are farmers on the one side and manufacturers on the other. The hon. gentleman will pardon me for the