

man, the inner and abiding principle which shapes his outward conduct to one definite and steadily consistent type, and grows stronger in thus shaping it. Loyalty is that which holds together the congeries of races and tongues called Switzerland, and which saved the United States in the great civil war. So much for one element which had a large share in making the history of Canada, but intermingled with them was a people of noble and ancient lineage, to whom I am proud to belong—a people isolated from the parent stock—a people abandoned by their natural parents, who found in the British Crown, though alien in race, in language and religion, a friend and protector when their need was the sorest, and under whose sway they enjoyed that liberty of the soul of which Roger Williams had dreamed. Is it any wonder, then, gentlemen, that gratitude with the French colonist should soon have developed into loyalty, and that there should have sprung up a deep-rooted feeling of attachment to the British crown as the tried guardian of their language, their institutions and their laws. (Cheers.) With such a stock of men, strong-hearted, level-headed, patient toilers of the land and sea, Canada was well equipped for all emergencies; against open aggression as well as subtle and tortuous methods of encroachments. And God knows we were spared neither of those. Whether we look back into our memories or listen to our grandparents, we find that every decade had brought its own troubles and alarms. There were the Maine boundary, the Oregon question, the sympathizers of '37, the "codfish war," the Fenian raids, and other weary disputes, during every one of which our speedy and irretrievable ruin has been confidently predicted; just as our candid friends are now cheerfully waiting the appalling results of the McKinley tariff to overtake us. But with all this the prudent and thinking men who happened to govern our country during those irritating times, relying upon the loyalty and the tried experience of the people, succeeded in preserving confidence at home and peace abroad. We had the extraordinary case of a Prime Minister reigning almost supreme over a democratic community, during over a quarter of a century, almost without interruption. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) It must be admitted, however, that

THE PRESENT CANADIAN OPPOSITION

had good reason to anticipate success at the elections which would necessarily have taken place in the autumn, for the sixth parliament was in the last year of its life. The influence of the Local Government was in their favor in all the provinces. They had been out of power since 1878, and it was their turn, for a Government so long in office as the present Dominion Cabinet, must make many active enemies and lukewarm friends. The farmers were uncomfortable and disposed for a change, when the Opposition committed the irretrievable blunder of identifying their party with a policy of unrestricted reciprocity with the United States, and thus traversing the continuous traditions of Canadian sentiment and history. Sir John Macdonald watched the moment when they should become hopelessly committed, and then, unexpectedly, dissolved the House and threw himself upon the national feeling of the people. The battle was fought politically, as far as party programme went, on a