

the River Ottawa. There is a sheriff and a registrar, and if I am not very much mistaken those officers are the officers who ought to perform the duties of returning officers, and yet I believe that those two officers were informed that they must decline to accept the office of returning officer under pain of dismissal by the Government of the day, so that the friends and supporters of the Government of the day might be appointed to fill them, and they did so of course. I would ask if there is not a sufficient justification as to the manner in which the present Government have exercised the power given to them by statutes to appoint returning officers in the fact that, although we have had an enormous crop of election petitions, although corruption and bribery have been charged against candidates on both sides, although a good many, some of whom were from the other side and of the party of purity, have been unseated, yet not one petition has alleged impropriety of conduct on the part of the returning officers chosen and selected by this Government. The hon. gentleman spoke about the Franchise Act, and he has said he hoped it will be repealed in 1889. Well, it may be repealed if the hon. gentleman is in power; but I think, to use Mr. Gladstone's celebrated phrase, that does not come within the limit of measurable possibilities. I am very glad the hon. gentleman and those who support him are about to adopt or have adopted, and will carry out, a judicious reticence respecting the Fishery Treaty. Of course, it would be premature to discuss it now, until the treaty itself and the papers are laid before the House; and even then, for reasons which will be obvious to leading members on the other side, a very considerable degree of caution with respect to the manner in which the discussion is carried on in the public interest should be observed. On that subject I hope to have an unofficial discussion with the hon. gentleman opposite. The hon. gentleman has endeavored to cast some degree of ridicule upon the prophecy which I ventured to make some years ago respecting the settlement of the North-West country. My estimates, although based on the reports of our various officers, I must admit have not been carried out. That they have not been carried out is in a very great degree due to the great earnestness, the great ability, and the great persistence with which hon. gentlemen opposite have expressed their views.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh! Oh!

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Hon. gentlemen may laugh, but it is a laugh of the lip and is outward only. The hon. gentlemen know that to them is due the fact that the settlement of this country has been so long retarded.

Mr. LANDERKIN. By bad government we know it.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman says he knows it; it is well he knows something. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Laurier) has remarked the marvelous tenacity with which we proclaim the prosperity of this country. We proclaim it with considerable tenacity because we believe we are justified in doing so. But what is our tenacity compared with that of hon. gentlemen opposite, who from the time of Confederation down to this day, except during the five years when we enjoyed so much prosperity, when it was so much developed under the auspices of hon. gentlemen opposite, have kept up a constant wail about the miserable condition of this country, as to the wretched condition of the people, as to the increasing poverty and increasing dependence of our people. That doctrine has been proclaimed in this House, it has been proclaimed on public platforms, it has been stated in the Opposition press and on the hustings and everywhere, and yet the people of Canada are so utterly ignorant of their misery, so utterly blinded to their misfortunes and the wretchedness under which they suffer, that they discard all the prophecies of hon. gentlemen opposite and they venture,

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD.

also unconscious of their doom as a victimised people—the victims being the people of Canada—to act as they did on the 22nd February last, as they did in 1882 and as they did in 1878, to support this party which persistently is ruining the country. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a free country. The people have a right to ruin themselves if they wish, and the people of Canada have, beyond a doubt, declared that ruin at our hands is preferable to prosperity at the hands of hon. gentlemen opposite. There is a difference of opinion as to what prosperity is, and as to what misfortune and calamity mean, and we happen to differ in opinion; the majority carries the day, and here we are governing the country. By the same token, referring to the elections on the 22nd of February last, there has been some elections since then; and, strange to say, such is the blindness of the people of Canada, although they have the advantage of common schools, of model schools, of high schools and of universities, and in fact every mode of instruction is afforded to the people, yet with all these advantages of education to bring them up to the right consideration of what the interests of Canada are, they deliberately prefer all this ruin at our hands than to take blessings from the hands of the hon. gentlemen and those who fight the battles behind them. Was it not enough to cause the hon. gentleman, if he felt called upon to use strong language, to use that language against the ignorance of the people who have decided in favor of the National Policy, who preferred a vicious economical system to a system of free trade, by which our industries and our trade would be thrown open to foreigners to compete against our own people? As I said a little while ago, the hon. gentleman was strongly in favor of the National Policy. The hon. gentleman's language is on record, and he spoke as strongly as I ever did, and a great deal more strongly in favor of it; and it has been cast up to me that I desired not an increased protection but only a readjustment. Well, I did say that we wanted a readjustment, and the readjustment was simply this: to increase the duty on articles we could manufacture ourselves, and take the duties off articles we could not manufacture or produce in this country. But the hon. gentleman was a protectionist of pure blood, and now, perhaps through the inevitable pressure of his political position, he is obliged to give up his old predilections and his own political opinions, and to declare that what he once said was an absolute requisite to the fiscal system of this country is a vicious economical policy. You know the story of the man in the lunatic asylum. I do not at all mean to say that my hon. friend is not in possession of all those great abilities and intellectual powers which have distinguished him since he has been in this House; I merely mention this story as an illustration. The man in the lunatic asylum was asked why he was there: "Well," he said, "it all arises from a difference of opinion; the people think I am mad, and I think all the people are mad, and the majority have carried it, and I am here." So my hon. friend thinks we have a vicious economical policy, the majority is against him, and he is there. The hon. gentleman also speaks about our wasteful expenditure in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which he says was built far too fast and cost far too much money and, perhaps, too much land. Well, Sir, suppose the policy of the Government of which the hon. gentleman was a member had been carried out, what would have been the position of affairs to-day? How would a crop of the North-West be got down to the sea-board? There have been about 12,500,000 bushels of wheat, or 400,000 tons, to be brought out of the North-West this year. Now, the water-stretches, with railways here and there, were promised to be capable of moving forty tons a day; so that to remove the whole of this season's crop would require 10,000,