

hon. gentleman declares that my policy has always been a very bad policy for Nova Scotia—that I have always been obstructing it. I am not going to enter to-day into a discussion of matters twenty years ago or eighteen years ago, which have been discussed and threshed out so often, and which the hon. gentleman, being so far removed from a special pleader, thought it fit to drag into this discussion. But I have spoken for a long time in one sense and in one voice with respect to the fundamental constitution and rights of the Provinces. I have not proposed any special plan for relief applicable to one, no principle which I did not think just to all. I believe this, as I said as long ago as 1883 and 1884, is a serious condition, and we ought to address ourselves to it. I think, with one exception only, which I will not complicate this discussion by even naming, it is the most serious difficulty that we in this Confederation have to meet; but I hold myself absolutely blameless from the suggestion of the hon. gentleman that I have been at one time unjust by the denial and at another time unjust by the proposal of a bribe or undue favor, either to the Province of Nova Scotia or to any other Province. Well, then the hon. gentleman, by the way once again of confining himself to the subject and showing that he is no special pleader, drew a red herring across the track; it was not a red herring, but a barrel of flour and a ton of coal. He discussed my Malvern speech. I could not help thinking that there has been a sort of premature delivery—that a portion of the hon. gentleman's Budget speech had been extracted by a sort of cesarian operation. It seemed so to me, at all events, for it did not appear to come out the natural way, and I thought it was by a very extraordinary operation that he was delivered. I am not going to discuss that point at length just now. The hon. gentleman put words into my mouth which I did not say. I stated the condition of things as to our fiscal and financial position earlier than in my speech at Malvern. I stated it in Toronto at the Adelaide street rink. In my speech at Malvern I opened what I said by declaring that I had nothing new whatever in point of principle to state, but having been grossly misrepresented by those opposed to me in politics, I proposed to speak with greater fullness and to explain more amply what had been my policy for the earlier periods and what continued to be my policy. In the course of that statement I repeated and enlarged upon the proposition to which I had alluded briefly in my speech in Toronto, the serious complication that the condition of our finances imposed on us with respect to duties in any proposed alterations of tariff. I showed that in my speech at Toronto I had used different expressions from those I had used in my address to my electors in 1882, and I showed in that respect and I gave the reasons. I did not in my speech use the word "modify," I used the word "reduce," in regard to taxation on coal and flour. The hon. gentleman said I used the word "modify."

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Reduce.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. gentleman declared that I said that the flour tax was to continue as it was, and now he acknowledges that I said it was to be reduced. But he is not a special pleader, and so we must excuse him. I declared the reason. I pointed to the deficits which the year before last, and last year, hon. gentlemen opposite had imposed on the country, and I pointed to the circumstance that reductions and abolitions of duty which, when there was an overflowing surplus, running from four millions in one year to six millions, the second year and seven millions in the third year, we could fairly and were bound to propose, but which it was absolutely impossible to propose when the finances had been scandalously managed and changed for the worse. That was the condition and that was the circumstance, and any hon. gentleman who will

Mr. BLAKE.

calmly read what I said at Malvern, will see that in no respect did I depart from the settled principle I have mentioned, in no respect did I depart from the single view I have taken, and that only changed conditions and circumstances necessarily for the time modified the application of those principles. Now the hon. gentleman says that I took back my policy, that I declared there was still to be a duty on flour, and on coal, because those two duties were no longer odious. No, I never did so. I have declared both taxes odious, and in the very speech to which the hon. gentleman refers, or to the speech immediately before it, I forget which, but I think it was the one to which he referred, I repeated the language used by me in 1882 with respect to taxes on articles of prime necessity, such as breadstuffs and coal. But, Sir, the people who, by the mal-administration of their rulers, are reduced to a position in which double expenditure and a depleted Treasury oblige them to bear undue burthens, will readily understand that those who are called to consider what the responsibilities of Government are, and who know that the maintenance of the credit of their country is the first object, cannot, under such a condition, do things which they would be glad and willing to do in the condition in which they proposed them and at the time when they ought to have been done. Now, I do not propose to complicate the discussion of the Oxford and New Glasgow Railway by a general discussion. A brief answer was necessary out of courtesy to the hon. gentleman, speaking as a special pleader to a plain man. That brief answer I have made, and I trust I have made it so plainly to him that he will not consider that I deserve a continuance of his criticism with regard to this subject.

Motion to adjourn withdrawn.

Mr. KIRK. The question of constructing this railway has been before the House for a good many years. I think this road was first spoken of in a bye-election in Pictou in 1881. In order to carry that bye-election the people of Pictou were promised that, as soon as possible, a railway would be built from Oxford to New Glasgow. When Parliament met after that election a proposition was made to this House to grant a subsidy of \$3,200 a mile to construct the road. The Minister of Finance, who was then Minister of Railways, led the House to believe that that amount per mile would be sufficient to construct the road, that it would be all the House would ever be called on to vote for that purpose. Well, Sir, we know that although the hon. Minister of Finance declared that the company to whom the contract was given were sufficiently able to go on with the work, they did not prove to be able to do so, and the road was not built. At the next general election the road was promised to be completed in 1884, but 1884 passed and 1887 came, and yet the road was not built. We all know the difficulties that occurred with regard to that road. We all know that the company failed to build the road with the subsidy and that Parliament was called upon to make good to the contractors, or to the laborers, the money expended on the road, and to pay those men for the work which they had performed. The Minister of Finance says this is an important road. There is no doubt at all about the importance of this road, but to whom is it important? It is important to the counties of Cumberland, Colchester and Pictou, to the districts through which the road passes, but I deny that it is of any such importance as the Minister of Finance pretends it is, to any other section of the country, to Antigonish, Guysboro', Prince Edward Island or Cape Breton. The hon. gentleman says the length of that road is seventy-five miles. I do not know what the length of it is. He has told us it will shorten the distance from Oxford to New Glasgow or Pictou on the present line by 45 miles. I do not know how much it will shorten it, but I have been informed by some of the best and most truthful men of the county of Pictou that it will not shorten it more than be-