

ges in order to place themselves in a position to bring the hon. gentleman into power. I ask the hon. gentleman if those pledges have been redeemed. Has the pledge made by the hon. Solicitor General, made in the most solemn manner that a man could make a pledge and on a most solemn and important question, been redeemed by this settlement, which the hon. gentleman boasts through the Speech from the Throne has been made on this question? The hon. gentleman will not say that the pledge given by the hon. member for Verchères (Mr. Geoffrion), or by other hon. gentlemen to whom it is not necessary more particularly to refer, made to the people of Quebec, in the most clear, strong and unqualified manner, that if the hon. gentleman was brought into power, they would withdraw their support from him if he did not carry out faithfully the pledge which the hon. member for Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) declared the hon. gentleman had made in order to obtain the support of the province or Quebec has been fulfilled. I am not now concerned as to how that support was obtained, but only as to the result of that action. The position now is this. In the discharge of what I felt to be a solemn duty that I owed to my country, in the discharge of what I believed to be a duty I owed to maintain the constitution of the country so far as I was able, I, in the most open manner, notwithstanding the antagonism of a large number of my hon. friends, for whose views I entertained the greatest regard, and whose opposition I knew was as conscientious as was my view in maintaining the opinions I did—I at very great risk as a public man, went forward to vindicate what I believed to be demanded in common justice by the minority under the constitution, and I was defeated, and defeated by the votes of the Roman Catholic electors of the province of Quebec. Under these circumstances I do not for a single moment hesitate to say that while my views remain unchanged, the responsibility which rested on the shoulders of Sir Mackenzie Bowell as leader of the Government, and which subsequently rested on my shoulders of dealing with this question as properly became the Government of Canada, now I am happy to say rests on the shoulders of the hon. gentleman opposite. I say more, if the hon. gentleman and his friends can reconcile those most interested in this question to their position and secure their consent to the manner in which they have disposed of the question, then I have not a word to say. No person will be more delighted to find it removed from Parliament once and for ever. I am glad that the responsibility no longer rests on my shoulders, and freed from the responsibility of Government, while my views remain unchanged and my personal opinions will be always maintained, I shall not feel it in the future as in the past incumbent on me to

Sir CHARLES TUPPER.

make those exertions that I did make in defending rights, the protection of which under the constitution now rests upon the shoulders of the hon. gentleman who sits opposite. I regret, Mr. Speaker, having been obliged to occupy so much of the time of the House in dealing with a question with which hon. gentlemen are so familiar, but I felt it incumbent upon me to do so, under the circumstances, and as this perhaps might be the only opportunity that might offer of correcting some misapprehensions under which hon. gentlemen opposite seem to labour as to what is the real position of this question.

Sir, I have now great pleasure in passing on to the question of the tariff, which is one of very great interest to the people of Canada, and about which expectation is rife at the present moment. I was a little surprised to find the statement made in the Speech that:

A measure will be submitted to you for the revision of the tariff, which is believed will provide the necessary revenue, and, while having due regard to industrial interests, will make our fiscal system more satisfactory to the masses of the people.

Sir, I feel as one of those who took an active part in the promulgation of the National Policy, as one who has been a firm supporter of it from that time until now, that it never occupied a prouder or more triumphant position than it occupies to-day. The hon. gentleman who moved the Address (Mr. Russell) referred to the deficit of \$300,000 on 1st July, 1896. But I call the attention of the House to the fact that the general election was quite sufficient to account for that deficiency, that the very uncertainty created in the minds of the commercial men of the country as to what might be the result of the election was sufficient to account for the deficit. Every person knows that the bare possibility of a party coming into power which was pledged in the most solemn manner to uproot every vestige of protection and adopt a policy of free trade in this country, was enough to create sufficient commercial disturbance to account for that deficit. But I have no hesitation in saying that the year 1896, when the National Policy had been eighteen years in existence, was the most successful year that Canada has experienced, the fact that the exports, that valuable indication as to what this country is able to export, reached a figure never previously attained was in itself sufficient tribute as to what the National Policy had done for this country and what has been achieved under it. Not only so, but the volume of trade increased in that year by no less than \$15,000,000. So if there was ever a time when a satisfactory financial and commercial condition of the country was shown, it was during that year, as established by statistics in relation to the operation of the tariff and the fiscal policy of Canada.