

country, but we would deal a blow to other interests of a wider and more serious character.

Mr. FOSTER. Oh, come to the point—you make us tired.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order, order.

Mr. McMILLAN. Do not let this moment of weakness put you into such a rage.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. If I were quite clear as to what point my hon. friend wishes me to come to at once, I am not sure that I would not be pleased to gratify him. However, I wish to say, and to emphasize the fact, that it has never been the policy of the Liberal party, as declared by any member of the Liberal party occupying a responsible position, if they came into power, to destroy at one movement all the manufacturing industries, or to so change the policy as to place them in peril. We are willing to be tried by the policy of the Liberal party as plainly understood, but we are not willing to be tried by the Liberal policy as expounded by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House.

Now, Sir, I have referred to-day to certain conditions which have altered, and I wish to speak briefly of these. The convention of the Liberal party was held in the city of Ottawa in the month of June, 1893. At that time we had every reason to believe that the people of the neighbouring republic had resolved to enter upon a more liberal trade policy. A few months before that date a presidential election had taken place in the United States, in which the issue of tariff reform was prominent; and, whatever may be said of the matter in view of later events, in the light of that day it did seem clear that the people of the United States had resolved to enter upon a policy of tariff reform. The Democratic party, which had just entered upon power, were at that very time engaged in propounding their policy of tariff reform. We thought the moment was opportune for us to place on record in the clearest and most emphatic way our desire, as representing a great party in Canada, to carry out a policy of tariff reform, and particularly to extend, if possible, our trade relations with the neighbouring republic, if they were disposed to reciprocate. There was more than the action of the Democratic party to encourage us in the belief that something could be done in that direction. Before that time the Republican party, who were in power, pledged as they were in the main to a high protective policy, had qualified their adhesion to protection by a declaration in favour of reciprocity treaties; and we had reason to believe, and did believe, that even with the Republican party in power it would be possible to obtain a reciprocity treaty with the United States if steps were taken in a pro-

Mr. FIELDING.

per way to secure such a treaty. However that may be, we were disposed to believe that the day was close at hand when more friendly relations would be established between the people of the great republic to the south of us and the people of Canada. Unhappily, Sir, the present indications are that the American people—if we may judge by the action of their House of Representatives—have changed their minds on that question. If we may take the expression of that House as being a fair exposition of the views of the American people, speaking not with reference to any particular article of the tariff, but speaking generally, the people of the United States appear now disposed to adhere to the policy of protection.

I believe that some of us in Canada make the mistake of imagining that our neighbours frame their tariff chiefly with reference to how Canada will act and what effect it will have on Canada. It may be very flattering to Canada to think that; but I rather think that they frame their tariff with reference to the world at large, and that a very moderate part of their attention is directed to what is taking place in Canada. Though I believe that some parts of the Dingley Bill were made to suit the interests of certain people who feared Canadian competition, I do not think we ought to assume that it is simply a measure of hostility towards the people of Canada. I think it only fair to mention that leading public men in the United States have intimated to men on this side of the line that while the Republican party feel bound to uphold the Dingley Bill, they do not of necessity mean to refuse to enter into improved trade relations with Canada. On the contrary, it has been urged that that is part of their policy, and they point to the fact that when the late Mr. Blaine was in power, though a high protectionist, he was disposed to negotiate reciprocity treaties with any countries which were disposed to deal with the United States. But while I think there is some ground for hoping for an improvement in our trade relations with the United States, we cannot but recognize the fact that the Dingley Bill, whatever the motive of it may have been, and I do not question the motive, will undoubtedly, if it becomes law—which seems highly probable, although I think it will be amended in some particulars—affect the trade relations between Canada and the United States to a very considerable degree. In view of that, we feel that we are justified in stopping to think what would be the effect of our policy if to-day, while on the eve of negotiations on the subject of reciprocity—if our American friends are willing to negotiate—we should, in advance of such negotiations, reduce our tariff down to low figures. I believe that there is nothing inconsistent with sound free trade principles in a Government endeavouring, in dealing with a neighbour, to hold in its hands whatever