

slightest intimation that an election was to take place. On the contrary, assurances were given in another place that until the new electoral lists were prepared no dissolution should take place; yet suddenly, in the month of January or the beginning of February, the announcement went forth to the country that it became necessary to summon a new Parliament—that the House which had only been sitting four sessions had become moribund, and that its members were not fitted to discuss the great and important question of our trade relations with the United States. I was very much amused by the remark of my hon. friend from Prince Edward Island, that Parliament, in his opinion, was not at all adapted to discussing such a question. He felt disposed to leave it to commissioners, and he thought it would only embarrass the matter if Parliament discussed it. One has only to compare the announcement of the Government on the dissolution of Parliament with the Speech from the Throne to see what entertaining literature it is: it will be extremely amusing to the future historian of the country. When the Government dissolved Parliament they said that the people would naturally wish to know why an appeal was made to the country. Then they went on to say that the Dominion Government had, through Her Majesty's Government, made a proposal to negotiate with the United States, and it became necessary to consult the people afresh. It is really entertaining to go back and read a statement of that kind when we know how absurd the proposition was, and that the Government had not the slightest knowledge that the Congress of the United States were prepared to enter into any negotiations. On the contrary, did not all our debates last year turn on that important question, and were we not told, from the standpoint of the Government and their supporters, that it was impossible to establish any trade relations with our neighbours? Was not the motion made over and over again in another place for closer trade relations with the United States and voted down; and accompanied with that were not the declarations of the leading members, not alone of the Government, but of their supporters all over the country, that it was not desirable to have trade relations with the United States, that such relations as the United

States were prepared to offer were impossible, that it would disturb the National Policy—that it would be inconsistent with the policy adopted in 1878? That was the position of things, and we know very well that so late as last Session a retaliatory tariff went through Parliament. The attention of the Government was called to the fact that in view of the possibility of trade relations being entered into with the United States it was folly and madness to place high duties on important articles, and calling the attention of the United States to the fact—duties on articles that we sent to them, not that they sent to us—on barley, for instance, and on animals. Was it not talked about in this Chamber, and pointed out that many articles were put in the tariff list that we did not import—articles that we sold to our neighbours—in order to deceive the farmer and make him believe that he was protected? What was the consequence? It was just as we predicted. It was announced in this Chamber that the effect would be to induce those behind the McKinley Bill to put those very articles in their tariff at a high rate. And they did so, and though there has been some squealing, we got exactly what we deserved and what it was predicted we would get. When we commence a war of tariffs with a people twelve times our number we must reap the consequences of our folly. That warning was uttered, but it was not listened to. We were told that we were independent of the United States, and did not want their market, that it was more profitable to trade with Hayti, Jamaica and the West Indies, to cross the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans to look for markets and to keep away from the best market in the world. That was the consequence? They hit us, and they hit us hard. It is no secret: it has been discussed all over the country. The Government knew very well that the people were beginning to understand the question better. Before that they did not understand what a tariff meant, but they now understand that it means a taxation, that it means collecting so much more from the people, and that the higher you have your tariff the more you collect from the tax-payers; so the Government wanted to snatch a verdict; and, in my judgment at all events, by, I won't say a trick, but what was an exceedingly unstatesmanlike act and a