

fore he trusted the present Government would give the interest of Nova Scotia a little more consideration than their predecessors had done, and place it beyond the possibility of any person to say truthfully that they were to continue in the future what they had been in the past—the hewers of wood and drawers of water for the more powerful and influential Provinces of the Confederation.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

MR. TASSE: Mr. Speaker, it is with some diffidence that I rise to speak on the momentous question now before us—especially in a language which is not my own. New and young members are supposed to have much to learn, and it would be wiser, perhaps, on my part to observe that golden silence which the hon. the leader of the Opposition has prescribed to us—the men of the young generation—the occupants of the back benches—the hon. member for Shefford having given us also a lecture in the same direction: lessons of wisdom which have been, no doubt, fully appreciated. Nevertheless, the interests involved in this question are so many and so important; they are so closely wedded to our prosperity and to our future greatness; the policy propounded by the Government is such a new departure, such an economic revolution—implying, as it does, our commercial autonomy; and the political metropolis which I have the honor to represent, has so distinctly expressed its opinion on the matter, that I feel bound, however unequal to the task devolving upon me, to submit candidly my views on the policy which is the best suited to the progress of our Canadian Dominion. At the outset, I must congratulate the Government, I must congratulate the Finance Minister, for having submitted a tariff which, I am confident, will commend itself to the approval of a great majority of the members of this House, of a great majority of the people of this country. This tariff is a complete vindication of the principles professed by the Conservative party. It is not a half measure, “neither fish nor flesh”; it is a thorough

protective, a thorough Canadian, a thorough national tariff. Whilst on the Opposition benches, our party committed themselves to a measure which—according to the motion of the then hon. leader of the left, since happily transferred to your right, Mr. Speaker—would protect the agricultural, the mineral, and the manufacturing interests of this country. And the most inveterate opponent of the Government cannot dispute the fact that our pledges, that our promises have been fully redeemed—even the late Finance Minister having admitted, to use his own words, that we have gone “great lengths in particular directions.” So whatever may be the consequences of this policy—may they be beneficial, may they enhance the general prosperity, or may they disappoint our legitimate anticipations—no one is warranted to impugn the sincerity of our present rulers, no one can justly assert that the confidence of the country has been betrayed or snatched under false pretences. In the course of the elaborate debate now still going on, much has been said on Free-trade and Protection. Notwithstanding what may allege our Free-trade theorists, political economy, in which they base their arguments, is not a science in the true sense of the word. It has no exact, no absolute, no invariable principles. Their application depends on so many conditions, on so many circumstances,—geographical, political or commercial—that they cannot be strictly adhered to. The idea of full liberty, the idea of an unfettered commerce might tempt me to be a Free-trader if everyone was a Free-trader; but as long as Free-trade is but a myth—as long as nations are opposed to direct taxation, and find proper to collect the revenue necessary to meet their expenditure through import duties on foreign products—I will believe that the true policy of every country is take care of its own interests, according to the circumstances under which it is placed, and to adopt a fiscal system that, while giving a sufficient revenue, will foster the production and the development of the interests most congenial to the resources of its soil and to the genius of its inhabitants. Free-trade theories, Sir, may be very good in themselves, but so far they have not gone beyond the sphere of mere

MR. McDONALD.