

What have you had since the beginning of January, 1896? You have had a party verging on towards power and afterwards coming into power, with every pronouncement, for the eighteen years preceding and up to the time the people placed them in authority, based upon the assumption that they were going to destroy the very principles upon which the business of the country had been based for the last eighteen years. Is there any doubt about that? None in the least. Take what their leaders have said. Take what they have formulated in this House. Take what their organs have said, and running through all the diversities—and heaven knows there are diversities enough to suit the minds of the most exacting in matters of change and differences, running through all the diversities, with all the different flags which they raised, with all the different colours which they flaunted, no matter how many sub-mottoes they may have had, there was one that never was absent, that was put on the highest place on every flag, and that was "Death to Protection." Was it commercial union that my hon. friend advocated as he did, what would commercial union have done? Whatever else it would have done, it would have destroyed the protective principle in the policy of this country. Was it continental free trade—and my hon. friend espoused that plan, not in a moment of weakness, but as an exhibition of chronic weakness which led him to take up every fad which came to his hand no matter how absurd—what would continental free trade have done? Whatever else it would have done, it would have destroyed the principle and policy of protection. My hon. friend advocated unrestricted reciprocity. He said at one time that he nailed it to the top of the mast and that he was going to keep under that flag, until it floated triumphant, no matter how long that took. Whatever else unrestricted reciprocity would have done, it would have destroyed the principle and policy of protection. Then my hon. friend took free trade as it is in England. The same remark applies to that. And when driven by better business men in his own party, he had to leave all his previous fads and avail himself of the declaration that he would adopt a revenue tariff, free from every vestige of protection; that also would have the effect of destroying protection. How well their policy was summed up in that terse and vigorous sentence of the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright):

Our policy, from first to last, has been to destroy this villainous protective system.

By free trade, by revenue tariff, or continental free trade, no matter which, the cardinal idea and doctrine was the destruction of the principle of protection. Now, I say that the business interests of this country were alarmed by a threat of eighteen years standing, backed up by the statements and

Mr. FOSTER.

declarations of hon. gentlemen opposite, up to the very day that they triumphed at the polls. Why, my hon. friend has only to take "the official report of the Liberal Convention held in response to the call of Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, leader of the Liberal party of the Dominion of Canada," held at Ottawa, Tuesday, June 20th, and Wednesday, June 21st, 1893. It is a little refreshing to go back to that time. I simply quote a few utterances to prove the point I am making. That father, that venerable father and mentor of the party, the good Sir Oliver Mowat, raised his voice in that conclave first of all. Amongst other things he declared that:

After the next general election, it may be truly said by the whole country that it was at the Liberal Convention at Ottawa, in June, 1893, that protection, and bad government, and consequent political unrest among our people received—

What, a gentle opiate? No—

—their death-blow.

Death to protection. Turning from good Sir Oliver and coming to the more wicked members of the convention, let me show what my hon. friend (Mr. Laurier) himself said:

This simply means—

He said in reference to that statement of mine as to protection:

—that the Government are going to scratch the paint and put on a new coat of varnish, and call it tariff reform.

Are not these strong words? I wonder if, in the next twenty-five days, we shall be in a position on this side to just quote that sentence. If the Minister of Finance is to be believed, we shall, because I take it that no Government could respect itself for a single moment, let alone face the independent and intelligent electorate, and put a high protective tariff on coal, half the coal affected not being produced in this country, but used by the farmers to a very large extent, and not treat every other industry in like manner. So we are looking for developments. The hon. gentleman went on:

Mr. Chairman, again upon this occasion, I want it to be well understood that we take direct issue here and now with the Government. The Government tells us that the principle of the National Policy they are going to maintain; and we answer to the Government, that the principle of the National Policy must be taken off, not only the branches.

He says further:

But I appeal to your judgment, in the face of the experience of the last fifteen years under the system which was introduced by the Conservative party, which was dubbed the National Policy, to say if that system is not vicious in principle, iniquitous in its terms, and dangerous in its consequences.

These are very inclusive words. They allow no honest man a single loop-hole of escape. If a man who goes before the