

— TO THE — ELECTORS OF EAST LAMBTON

GENTLEMEN:

Your Parliament is dissolved; an Election is at hand. The Reformers of this Riding have honored me with their choice as a Candidate for a seat in the House of Commons. With thanks, and with pride, I accept the candidature. It is therefore proper that I should state to you my views upon some of the questions of the hour. It is quite impossible within the limits of an address to discuss at length the many political questions before us.

Believing in local control of local affairs—in the people of each community managing those matters which affect only themselves in their own way—in short, having faith in the capacity of the people to attend to their own business, I am opposed to the overriding by Ministers at Ottawa of the acts of our Provincial Legislature, in matters affecting this Province only, as exemplified in the disallowance of the Rivers and Streams Bill.

I believe that the award which the three distinguished Arbitrators unanimously made in the matter of the boundary of Ontario should have been confirmed by the Dominion Government, and that when both political parties in our Ontario Legislature twice censured the Dominion Government for not confirming it, they expressed the true feeling of the people of the justly proud Province of Ontario.

I believe that attention to the geographical relations of old Canada to the Great North-West must lead to the conviction that the granting of control over communication between these two sections of the Dominion to the Canadian Pacific Railway Co., was a commercial and political error of the first magnitude. That the young and vigorous North-West will long submit to the imposition I do not believe.

The manner in which the re-distribution of seats in Ontario has been made, has, in my opinion, aimed a heavy blow at representative government. It is a deliberate attempt to make a minority in the country a majority in parliament. It has virtually disfranchised thousands of voters. In violation of principles urged strongly but a few years ago by the leader of the present government, it has recklessly disregarded County boundaries. It has been directed especially against the leaders of the Reform party, and throughout is destitute of the principles of fair play which we have been taught from boyhood to respect. Canadians cannot afford to sanction such measures at the hands of any party.

The supporters of the Government are directing your attention exclusively to the Custom House Tax and claiming the present condition of the country as its fruit.

With this tariff I do not fully agree; believing that in some respects it rests with a heavy hand upon families having only a small income; that the tax upon some of the prime necessities of life—those that even the poorest must have—are taxed much heavier than goods consumed by the more able, and thus violating the principle of equitable taxation. I believe that the tariff upon all agricultural products, of which we produce more than we consume, has not fulfilled the promises made and has been of small use, except in enabling the Government to deceive farmers, and that its use in this respect is rapidly passing away. While I believe the tariff requires revision I think all tariff changes should be made with great care and that “no statesman can honestly disregard interests which have been created.” I deny most emphatically that this is a conflict between the present tariff and free trade. The interest upon our heavy Dominion debt of \$155,000,000, as well as our rapidly increasing current expenses, must be largely paid by the Custom House Tax.

Storms, floods and want of sunshine have seriously decreased the farm products of the Old World, which has made an active demand for Canadian farm surplus; the return of prosperity to the United States has caused a strong demand for the products of our forests. The increase of our exports in 1881 over 1879 from these two products, namely the farm and forest, was thirty-two million dollars (\$32,000,000.) This has largely increased our purchasing power and benefit business generally. When the Government claims that to it (the Government) is due credit of the improvement of the times, it simply offers an insult to your intelligence. I know of no difference in the causes which give prosperity to an individual and to a nation, and believe that the same economy should be practiced by a Government as that which gives success to the individual.

To my immediate townsmen and those having a common business interest with me; those who like myself have their all invested in our local industry, I need hardly say that I should try to guard our interests and resist to the uttermost any attacks upon our established business rights; rights which were confirmed to us by the Mackenzie Government six years ago in spite of strong opposition.

Gentlemen, I ask for your votes on the morning of Tuesday, the 20th inst.

Faithfully Yours,

J. H. FAIRBANK.

Petrolia, June 2nd, 1882.