

MR. COCKBURN said he had hitherto maintained silence during the discussion of the proposed trade policy brought before the House during the last few years. It was needless for him to explain the difficulties which he saw in the way of carrying out a policy to suit different interests and different sections of the country. The hon. member for Cumberland had already admitted that it was impossible to combine these interests in order to carry this out, but he went further and hoped to secure a majority at the general election to enable him and his friends to bring about the so-called National Policy. Hon. gentlemen opposite had had a majority in two Parliaments. In the first they passed this National Policy, and during the same Parliament abolished it, and never made another move in that direction. He should be very happy to see steps taken by which inter-provincial trade could be brought about. He did not take any particular interest in any section or in any particular branch of industry, and he had the most fraternal feelings towards members from the different Provinces, but, observing, as he had, the signs of the times and the teachings of experience, it did not require very much perception to see at once that the whole scheme that had been proposed was impracticable. Members representing wheat and flour producing districts had their own selfish policy. They desired to see duties imposed on bread stuffs, which members from mining districts voted against, while, at the same, they wanted duties upon coal. These different interests were conflicting. There were interests also besides the manufacturing, mining and milling interests—interests that could not be assisted by any imposition of duties—such as the lumber and fishing interests. In regard to those and also in the nearer sections of the country, the effect of these imports would be to increase the cost of developing the country and of carrying on the lumbering and fishing business of the country. It might not, perhaps, be quite in order to say that it appeared very much as if some of these policies which were proposed were put forward at this time more for the purpose of

MR. McCALLUM.

embarrassing the Government than for any other purposes, inasmuch that the very men who now proposed them had formerly voted to abolish what they now advocated. It was clear that the different sections of the country would not unite on this policy; therefore, it remained for Parliament and the Government to adopt a policy which would confer the greatest benefit on the greatest number, and that was the policy which this Government had been pursuing. He (Mr. Cockburn) had been perfectly unprejudiced in this matter. He was free to admit that the proposal of Protection was very fascinating to superficial thinkers who did not go thoroughly into the question, and was supposed to be a good stroke of party tactics designed with a view to catch stray voters; but he was sure, taking it all in all, that the present Government had had no other object in the policy which they had adopted than the general good of the country. Their predecessors had had an opportunity of introducing a different policy. They did so and then abolished it, and now brought it forward with a view of embarrassing the Government. Hon. gentlemen opposite had not now the same facilities for arranging for the coming struggle which they had in 1872. After abolishing the National Policy, they had the opportunity to jerrymander the constituencies, to arrange with a wealthy gentleman in Montreal, and select what returning officers they chose—one of the latter had to be brought to the bar of the House. He came down at a cost of \$40, and left with \$200 in his pocket from the contingent fund, and got an appointment in the Excise office besides.

Several Hon. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman is not speaking to the question.

MR. COCKBURN said of course he bowed to the decision of Mr. Speaker. He did not think the industrial classes would appreciate the taxation of bread or fuel. They heard a good deal about slaughter markets. In regard to the iron interests, the foundry business, he thought it was easy to trace the depression to its real cause.

Some Hon. MEMBERS: Order.