

the country suffered from an unprecedented depression, affecting its commercial and agricultural existence. All sorts of remedies were suggested. Some, Micawber-like, thought it best to wait and see what would "turn up!" Others, on the contrary, wanted immediate action taken, advocating the construction of a moderate tariff wall between Canada and the United States, which would at once protect our struggling industries and prevent the Americans from making our country a slaughter market for their goods. The latter idea tended to revolutionize the politics of the nation, hitherto based on free trade principles. John A. Macdonald, Cartier, Cauchon, and Galt were free traders. But the principles that underlie political economy are not absolutely fixed, as facts are more convincing arguments than the theories propounded by either Mill or Bastiat. Mr. Masson was opposed to free trade and in favour of protecting our nascent manufactures. The result is now matter of history. The Mackenzie Government was snowed under in the elections of 1878 and Sir John A. Macdonald was entrusted with the formation of a new Cabinet. M. Masson was in Europe at the time, and it was only on his return and with his approbation that Sir John selected his Ministers for the province of Quebec. Mr. Masson was given the portfolio of Militia, which his health compelled him, the subsequent year, to resign for the presidency of the Council. The new Ministry was formed in Montreal. So soon as it was known that Mr. Masson belonged to it, he was given a public ovation that testified, from its spontaneity and magnificence, to the high character which he bore with the people. His journey to Terrebonne was a triumphal march. Arrived at St-Vincent-de-Paul, he made a speech replete with the most important declarations. To a certain extent, it was an official utterance, the first that outlined the policy of the new administration.

On the same occasion, he touched upon another very delicate subject, the Letellier *coup d'Etat*. In adhering to his preconceived notions of the right and wrong on this question, he was subsequently beset by numberless vexations. We know how this untoward event terminated. During the session of 1878, Mr. Letellier was impeached and condemned, the result, of course, depriving him of his position as Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec. But two months were allowed to elapse and still Mr. Letellier remained in Spencer Wood. This unaccountable delay on the part of the Federal Government provoked the