

fiscal questions were not able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion as to what was intended.

Now, I listened to this most remarkable address with the most profound astonishment, because it violated the most plain, clearly understood and well known laws governing the Parliament of Canada. It was in antagonism with the constitution of the country and in violation of everything that hon. gentlemen on either side of the House had a right to expect from a Minister of Finance. The hon. gentleman treated us to the usual jeremiad on the policy of protection. Only that the vigour and the spirit were lacking with which the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) used to deal with this question, we could imagine that, in a diluted and weaker state, he was giving to us again his oft-told tale of the blue ruin and destruction caused by the National Policy. The hon. gentleman undertook to give us the history of protection and was not altogether accurate, as he must have learned to-day from listening to the speech just delivered by his predecessor (Sir Richard Cartwright). The hon. gentleman told us that in 1876 the question of protection to Canadian industries was first raised. In that the hon. gentleman was right. If he will go back to the "Hansards" of 1876 to 1878, he will find that the Opposition to the Government of which Mr. Mackenzie was then leader and the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) was Finance Minister, were imploring that Government, from day to day, to come to the rescue of a sinking and impoverished country and give sufficient protection to the industries of Canada. The hon. gentleman ventured to say the other night, and I have no doubt that he believed what he said, that Mr. Mackenzie was approached by the manufacturers of Canada and begged to raise the tariff, but that he heroically resisted. What did that hon. gentleman think of that statement in the light of the declaration made from that seat a few moments ago by the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) that the tariff as it has now been tabled in this House was practically the same tariff that he wished to introduce in 1876, but was prevented by political considerations. Why, Sir, that was not news to me. I knew that in response to the urgent appeal from this side of the House and the universal demand of the dying industries of this country, that the Mackenzie Government had made up their minds to increase the tariff and come to the rescue of these suffering and ruined industries, but that they were prevented by Hon. Mr. Jones's arrival in Ottawa just before the tariff was brought down, who threatened that if they did not abandon the proposal to which they had all agreed and which has been declared to-night by the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) as the

tariff he was prepared to introduce but for political considerations, the whole Nova Scotia brigade on the Liberal side would go into opposition and turn them out. That is the history of that event which the hon. gentleman seemed to be quite ignorant of. The fact is that from 1867 to 1873 Canada was fairly prosperous. And the reason was to be found not in a high tariff, but in the fact that the industries of the great republic to the south of us were completely paralyzed and disorganized by a civil war, and this afforded us as ample a protection for our industries as any person could desire. That internecine struggle came to a happy close, and the industries of that great republic resumed their wonted condition. But, oppressed with a gigantic debt which the war had imposed upon them, the United States immediately resorted to high protection as the means of meeting their national engagements and wiping out their debt. Thus Canada found itself with a Chinese wall of protection raised against it, shutting out everything from this country, while the low tariff that we then possessed left this country a slaughter market for the industries of the United States, and everything in the shape of Canadian industry was practically paralyzed or driven out of existence. It was under that condition of things that the cry for fair, legitimate and necessary protection to Canadian industries was raised by the Liberal-Conservative party. And, Sir, those who will read the speeches delivered on the floor of the House in criticising the Budgets of the Minister of Finance, will find that steadily, year by year we advanced in that direction. We pointed out the absolute necessity of adopting a protective policy and we pledged ourselves in the face of Parliament and the country that if we were entrusted with the administration of public affairs we would take the earliest opportunity of carrying out that policy. I need not tell the House that a more deplorable condition of things, perhaps, never existed in any country—from fiscal causes certainly than Canada presented. I need not tell the House that hon. gentlemen then in power found themselves utterly unable to obtain the means from the low tariff that was then in existence, though they increased it by 2½ per cent. to find the necessary money for the ordinary expenditure of the country. They were obliged year after year to face huge deficits, rolled up not for the purpose of carrying on public works or for any expenditure of that kind, but occasioned by the lack of means to carry on the ordinary business of the country. There was a condition of universal stagnation, a condition in which all the progress that had been exhibited under Liberal-Conservative rule disappeared, and, from one end of this country to the other, stagnation and poverty and decay were present. Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at