

1859 there had never been such a grand convention in the history of Canada.

It was a very peculiar course the leader of the House took on that occasion. He did not lay down, as other leaders have done, a programme of his own. He said that he came there to learn; that he invited the magnates of the Liberal party all over Canada to come there and confer on the state of Canada, and enunciate a policy that would be not the policy of the leader, but the policy of the combined wisdom of the Liberal party. Hon. gentlemen will find at page 23 of the report, the hon. gentleman said:

I appear before you now simply to confirm what has already been stated by Mr. Sutherland, that this convention is not a convention to ratify cut-and-dried resolutions, but that the work today remains with the members of the convention itself. This is in every sense of the word a Liberal, a democratic convention. I am anxious, and my friends who are associated with me in leading the Liberal party are anxious, that in the policy to be adopted, all the suggestions should come from the people themselves, who are here represented.

Thus the principle laid down at that convention were the principles of the Liberal party. The convention passed a series of resolutions, and one of these resolutions, which will be found recorded at page 71 of the volume, is as follows—

That the customs tariff of the Dominion—

I ask the attention of the House to these words, because I am going to prove my proposition as I would prove a mathematical proposition.

—should be based not, as now, upon the protective principle, but upon the requirements of the public service.

That the existing tariff, founded upon an unsound principle, and used, as it has been, by the Government, as a corrupting agency wherewith to keep themselves in office, has developed monopolies, trusts and combinations.

That to that end, the tariff should be reduced to the needs of honest, economical and efficient government.

That it should be so adjusted as to make free, or to bear as lightly as possible upon the necessities of life, and should be so arranged as to promote freer trade with the whole world, more particularly with Great Britain and the United States.

We denounce the principle of protection as radically unsound, and unjust to the masses of the people, and we declare our conviction that any tariff changes based on that principle must fail to afford any substantial relief from the burdens under which the country labours.

It was put forward before the whole country, and the whole country was called to witness, that if those hon. gentlemen got into power, they would eliminate, to use their own language, every shred of protection from this tariff. What was the utterance of Mr., now Sir Wilfrid Laurier. He said, and his remarks will be found at page 32:

Gentlemen, you have nothing to expect from them.

The hon. gentleman intended to say that the people had nothing to expect from the Conservatives, and that they had much to expect from the Liberals. The hon. gentleman was here referring to the promise made by Sir John Thompson in respect to mouldering branches. Again, the hon. gentleman said:

Apart from the logic of events, you have the word of Mr. Foster himself, who has declared again and again within the last few weeks that tariff reform would consist in this, that there might be a few changes here and there, but that the principle of protection in the National Policy would be maintained. This simply means that the Government are going to scratch off the paint and put on a new coat of varnish, and call it tariff reform.

The hon. gentleman here meant, of course, that he would not merely take off the varnish or put on a new coat of paint, but he would tear down the scaffold and erect a new structure from foundation to roof. He continued:

By virtue of what principle will you tax the farmer in order to give work to the workingman? On what principle will you tax the workingman in order to give better price to the farmer?

There is not, I may say, a single province throughout the Dominion which clamours so much and so loudly to be freed from the incubus of the National Policy as Manitoba. * * * * * I submit to you that every cent that is levied should be levied first and foremost upon the luxuries of the people.

The Prime Minister came west. He spoke at Winnipeg, Moosomin, Regina, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, and I think at Edmonton—I forget whether he spoke at Medicine Hat or not—and at every one of those places he spoke in the same vein. The hon. gentleman had with him at one time the Minister of Marine and Fisheries and at another time the Minister of Agriculture, and the Minister of Agriculture in definite terms went into the very grievances arising from the duty on agricultural implements. I will not read the speeches delivered on those different occasions, but I will make a quotation from a speech delivered by the present Minister of Agriculture at Moosomin, a report of which will be found in the Moosomin "Spectator," October 4, 1894. The hon. gentleman is of course concerned with any agricultural problems that require consideration at the hands of the Cabinet, and I quote from his speech. He said:

As a farmer, he was not satisfied with the reduction which had been made in the agricultural implement duty.

"What reduction was that? It was a reduction made by the ex-Finance Minister from 20 per cent to 15 per cent." This reduction was made at one fell swoop, to use the sympathetic and eloquent language of the hon. member for Eastern Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas), and the Conservative Government re-