

there that no part of the Liberal policy would be to remove the duty from coal unless free access could be got to the markets of the United States. I know that has been the steady declaration of these gentlemen. The provincial government, of which Mr. Fielding was premier, has profited to the extent I have shown by the development of the coal industry, which is due to the National Policy. During the five years that the Mackenzie government was in power the coal industry dwindled down, as the amount of the royalty derived from it plainly shows, while during the 18 years since, there has been a remarkable development, from which the Nova Scotia government has largely benefited. There is another matter on which they have assumed conflicting attitudes, and it is to my mind a very interesting subject, and I do not think that hon. gentlemen opposite will have any objection to give me an explanation. My hon. friend, the Minister of Justice, as premier of the province of Ontario, some two or three years ago, put the sum of \$25,000 in the estimates as bounties for the production of iron in the province of Ontario. The subject was discussed in this House and my hon. friend, the Secretary of State, when the matter was brought up here, did not hesitate to say that it was a piece of folly. I am not going to settle which of these hon. gentlemen is right in regard to the matter. I suppose the \$25,000 estimates for iron produced in the province of Ontario was a youthful indiscretion on the part of the Minister of Justice, and that his folly will cease with his youth, and that he will not continue foolish in spite of age and experience, and his contact with my hon. friend, the Secretary of State. References have been made to the complexion of the Cabinet in the various discussions with regard to the present position of public affairs, and the address usually furnishes (although there is not much in itself) a wide range for discussion and the complexion of the government properly comes in for consideration at this stage. I must say a most extraordinary course has been pursued in the formation of this government. The premier has not selected his colleagues altogether from the ranks of the men who had fought side by side with him in the political arena of the Dominion, and who had been before the country as Dominion public men. He has, to a large extent, departed from that rule—has passed

over these men, and after the elections were found to be successful to his party, has filled important places in his Cabinet with men who had not been before the electors and who could not have been anticipated by the electors to be members of a Cabinet if the party succeeded. I do not think this was right to the electorate. When the people of the country go to the polls, they not only vote on the great questions before the country, but also vote, to some extent at least—I daresay to a very large extent—in accordance with the estimate they form of public men that are seeking their confidence. It was natural and right that that should guide the electors to a large extent, and it is but fair to assume that the people of Canada, in giving the votes they did give, assumed that in the formation of the government to rule the country for the next five years it would be composed largely of men who are not the men selected by Mr. Laurier. I do not think he was acting constitutionally and it was not doing justice to the electors of Canada. But there is another objection, and I think it is a very strong one—that is, that the premiers of the different provinces should be, as I fear was the case in the present instance, induced to exert the influence of their administrations to procure their own personal advancement. Indeed, I have seen the statement made not long ago as early as the Ottawa convention of 1893 that it was settled in the minds of the leaders of the party that Mr. Blair and Mr. Fielding should be taken into the Cabinet if the Liberals reached power. It is an undesirable, almost a dangerous state of things, to our federal institutions that we should have provincial premiers, with all the power and prestige that their governments possess behind them, working, no doubt in their estimation for the public good, but with this reward before them, that if they succeed they will be taken out of the provincial arena and made members of the Federal Cabinet. We know that in the Maritime provinces, in some of them at least, extraordinary influences were exercised in the federal elections by the provincial government and it leads to the belief on our part that this extraordinary effort made by these premiers and their colleagues was intensified to a considerable extent by the belief that they would themselves benefit by a change that would be brought about if their party