

never had a good word, until now, to utter in favour of protecting any industry. It has at last come to the conclusion that my hon. friend who moved the address has reached, that large vested interests exist and therefore they should not be interfered with, no matter what principle is violated. Speaking of the coal duty it says :

There are fifteen million dollars invested in the coal industry of that province. Several thousand men are employed, and many millions of money annually expended, so that, "no one can be indifferent to its maintenance and progress. If no fair concessions are made by the American Congress, then no patriotic Canadian, and certainly no Nova Scotian, will hesitate to uphold the government in seeing that an important coal industry is maintained in its integrity."

Now, compare that with the utterance of of Mr. Laurier in Montreal when he was asking for the votes of the manufacturers. Then he said :

There are two articles which are raw material of every manufacturer, and these articles are coal and iron, and are they free? If you have a revenue tariff, the object will be to develop the country, and all raw materiel should be free under such a tariff.

Contrast that utterance of Mr. Laurier's with the utterance of Mr. Fielding, the other day, and then draw your own conclusions as to which is the honest politician of the two. Or what are we to think of a government where you have the Finance Minister telling people that a certain industry is of such a character that it will not do to interfere with it, and his organ, because it is well known the *Chronicle* is the organ of the Finance Minister, if the articles are not written by himself, affirming that the duty on coal must be retained, and the premier of the government stating it must be free. The public must draw their own conclusions as to the principles of these men. Either free trade is correct or it is wrong. If it is right, it is the duty of those who advocate it, not only to frame a tariff to meet the requirements of the country, but to promulgate it at the earliest possible moment. If they have not the courage of their convictions, as they are proving they have not, then they should take the course which they have taken and say manfully that they have changed their opinion. If they do so they will have my congratulation on their sudden conversion, but the question will remain whether the removal from one side of the House to the other has not been the cause of the conversion, rather

than a desire to carry out any certain principles. There is so much connected with this question of the tariff that I could occupy hours in discussing it. There are portions of this address to which I shall refer very briefly. Two promises made to the people are mentioned in the address—one to repeal the Franchise Act, and the other to submit the question of prohibition to the people by a plebiscite. That the Franchise Act is so objectionable to the people as has been stated, I am not prepared to admit. I say further that all legislative bodies such as the Dominion should have control of their own franchise. When you consider the diversity of systems throughout the Dominion, you can easily understand the difference in the character of the voters which would under the system proposed by the government have the right to send members to the House of Commons. The principal objection which has been made to the Franchise Act has been the expense attending it. That, I admit, is an objection. I have been opposed all my life to manhood suffrage, but it were better a thousand times that we should have manhood suffrage throughout the whole Dominion, so that we should all sit in the House of Commons upon an equality, than to have the various systems which prevail in the several provinces of the Dominion. Are we to have a repetition of what I have known to take place in my own province. I will not say whether it was during the reign of my hon. friend opposite, or before he took charge, but I am inclined to think it was when he was leader of the government? The government decided to have an election. The courts of revision throughout the province had sat and done their work, but the government had not notified their friends throughout the country that there was to be an election at so early a period, and in order to give them an opportunity to prepare the lists for the election, they repealed the law as it stood, abandoned the revision which had taken place and put the whole country to the expense of another revision from one end of the province to the other.

Hon. Sir OLIVER MOWAT—I do not remember anything of that kind. When did that occur?

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I do not remember the year.