

duties were reduced not as a matter of policy, not because of the condition of the country, but simply with the object of influencing an impending election in the province of Saskatchewan. I would not venture to make the suggestion myself, although my confidence in the Government is not very great. But the charge is made by one of their own supporters, and therefore it is more serious for them than if it had come from me. In July last the 'Canadian Courier' published this letter:

May 10, 1912.

To the Right Hon. R. L. Borden.

Hon. Sir,—Some weeks ago the cement interests were advised that certain members of your Cabinet were contemplating the reduction of the duty on cement and sundry other articles, with the sole view of influencing the elections pending in the Northwest provinces. Messrs. Rogers and Cochrane were the prime movers, and according to our information it was intended that the order should be rushed through in the absence of yourself, Mr. White and Mr. Foster. Such an order would be inconsistent with the doctrine of the Conservative party and contrary to the pledges of every leading member of your Cabinet. I may here say that a deputation from companies interested, interviewed Mr. White and Mr. Foster a short time ago and presented our case. The deputation was received with great courtesy and was assured by the ministers that the duty on cement would not be lowered.

However, I see by to-days' 'Daily World,' Toronto, a semi-official statement that this good Conservative doctrine and the personal pledges of nearly every one of your ministers are to be ignored, and the whole cement industry of the Dominion is to be destroyed, all for the sake of assisting Mr. Rogers in his election.

Such a breach of faith on the part of your Cabinet should and would bring about disaster to the party at the next election.

You act on the principle that a little strained money advantage in the West would help your party at present. That might be so, but you should think what would be the effect in Ontario and other parts of the Dominion if you depart from your honoured National Policy and destroy an industry in which so many millions of money are invested. Our company has upwards of four hundred stockholders, and the total number of cement shareholders must be about ten thousand. I ask you, would it pay you to sacrifice these ten thousand, mostly your supporters, for a paltry success gotten by the sacrifice of principles which you and the Conservative party have for years advocated, and which placed you in your present proud position?

No man ever entered upon a career with a better name or brighter prospects. You were admired as a true man by Tory and Grit alike, and it would be a sad blow to the Conservatives to find you breaking a pledge or weakening to the baser elements of your ministry.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier held his party together by the firmness of his management and his adherence to his own personal pledges and the traditions of his party; but in a moment of

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

weakness he listened to the voice of the tempter, to Fielding, Paterson and 'The Globe'—you know the result; his party spurned him and them.

You were elected to fill the place of that great statesman, Sir John A. Macdonald, in the Conservative party; you have the ability, honesty and a good name which the whole world recognizes and is waiting to see if you have the generalship and firmness of character necessary to control your Cabinet and not permit them to lead you into shallows and confusion.

I have written this in the interest of the company I represent, and I say sincerely, as your ardent admirer and a life-long supporter of the Conservative party, that I trust, notwithstanding the rumours to the contrary that your decision will be on true national grounds.

Yours faithfully,

The answer of my hon. friend (Mr. Borden) was marked 'confidential' and was therefore not given to the press. But the rejoinder to that answer appears in the same issue, as follows:—

June 10th, 1912.

To the Right Hon. R. L. Borden.

Hon. Sir,—One month ago to-day I had the honour of addressing a letter to you on the subject of the duty on cement, and beg to refer you thereto. On the 13th May I received your prompt and courteous reply. In my letter I called your attention to rumours to the effect that certain of your ministers, in your absence, were pledging your Government to a reduction of the duties on cement, and for the sole purpose (according to rumours) of influencing the elections in Saskatchewan in favour of the Conservative party. In your reply you stated that I gave undue credence to rumours which appear in the press, but it now appears that the rumours as to lowering of cement duty only foreshadowed the event which has taken place; unless the report in the 'Globe' to-day is equally astray. It now appears that what seemed to my credulous mind to be a conspiracy against your honour and the pledge of our leaders has taken place, and all for the sake of influencing a petty local election in a western province.

Your letter to me, which I believed was written in all sincerity, led me to believe that such action was in no way contemplated, and that there was no fear of a departure from the well defined and established policy of the Conservative party.

In view of your letter, as manager of this company, I proceeded in the expenditure of several thousand dollars for the purpose of increasing our output, and have commenced the season on a larger scale than ever before. Had I not believed your letter, or had you suggested the most remote possibility of the lowering of the duty, or even that the matter was under consideration, I would have advised the directors to close the plant and hand it over to the English bondholders.

The action of the Government in this matter is a violation of every pledge given before election, and is distinctly repugnant to the Conservative party. There can be no economic reason for it since there are over one