

increased to 17½ per cent. It is unnecessary to tell the people of this country the position in which Canada stood at that time. It was anything but good; our manufacturing industries were closed, our labouring men thrown out of employment. As a result of that, the business men of this country sent a delegation to Ottawa to wait on Sir Richard Cartwright, then Minister of Finance, asking that he give a measure of protection to the interests of this country. However, he ignored their request, they had to go home unsatisfied. But it was not very long until a man rose to the occasion in the person of that great statesman, Sir John A. Macdonald. He espoused the policy of protection and made it a plank in his platform during the election of 1878, with the result that he carried this country with an overwhelming majority. He continued that policy of protection consistently for the 18 years that his Government was in office, subject of course to certain regulations which were necessary to comply with the needs of the country. During that time what were our Liberal friends in this country doing? They were still advocating a revenue tariff. In 1891 they advocated unrestricted reciprocity with the United States, and later on, prior to the election of 1896, they advocated free trade as they have it in Great Britain. During that time the people of Canada rejected these policies; they rejected the revenue tariff and also reciprocity with the United States; and prior to the election of 1896 Hon. Edward Blake, who was considered one of the leading statesmen among our honoured friends, challenged them before they talked of free trade as being practicable in Canada, to devise some possible plan whereby the revenue needs of this country could be met in any other way than by placing a duty on goods similar to those which were produced in this country. That was the challenge thrown out by the Hon. Edward Blake. The hon. gentleman opposite never devised any feasible plan nor have they done so up to the present time. What did they do? They were returned to power in 1896. They were not returned as a result of the policies which they had advocated, but they were returned on an issue that was foreign to the fiscal policy of this country. They had the opportunity of their lives when they came into office. The right hon. the leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), a man of ability, I admit, had told the people of Canada that if he was placed in power he would give them free trade as they had it in Great Britain.

He told the farmers in this country that the manufacturers were nothing but a lot of robbers and that if he was placed in power he would abolish every vestige of protection. I say to the right hon. gentleman, and I am sorry he is not in his seat, that then was the opportunity, if he was sincere in what he told the farmers of this country, to give free trade as they had it in Great Britain. But, Sir, what did he do? It has been said, and it has not been denied, that he gave an assurance in secret to the manufacturers of this country that, if returned to power, he would see that their interests were conserved and their protection retained. Let that be as it may. We are satisfied that after Sir Wilfrid Laurier was elected in 1896 he took to his bosom the manufacturers of this country who, he claimed, were robbing the farmers of Canada. During the election, I think in Centre Toronto, Mr. Bertram, the Liberal candidate, was authorized to give the assurance to the manufacturers of Centre Toronto that their protection would not be abolished; and on the strength of that Mr. Bertram was returned as a supporter of the hon. leader of the Opposition. I will go further, and say that during the fifteen years the right hon. gentleman was in power he consistently carried on the policy of protection. What did he do when he went out of office in 1911, after he had entered into that reciprocity agreement with the United States, and was asking for the people's mandate upon it? He said to the manufacturers of this country: I have always befriended you, and I am going to befriend you still; I am going to see that your protection still remains; and he had nothing to say regarding the best interests of the farmers of Canada.

In this connection let me read what the hon. member for North Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt)—and I am sorry he is not in his seat—said in the reciprocity campaign. He spoke at a meeting in the city of Woodstock, and is reported by the *Toronto Globe* as follows:

He could not see that the manufacturers would be touched very much, as few articles manufactured in Canada were affected. He was sure the Bain and Woodstock wagon companies would compete in the world's markets, even with 2½ per cent reduction in the tariff. He thought the manufacturers opposed reciprocity because of what might follow, the "thin edge of the wedge," but he had been assured by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Mr. Fielding that nothing of the sort would follow. They had gone as far in the farmers' interest as they would.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier was asked whether he had given Mr. Nesbitt authority to give that assurance, and this is what he said: