

other necessities of the people of Canada by at least \$100,000,000, without counting hundreds of millions saved to the people by the absence of excess profits which the manufacturers might otherwise have been able to make upon those commodities. Therefore, the country, during that time, enjoyed a freedom of tariff to the extent of some two or three hundred million dollars. After some two or three years of study and effort, our late leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and the ex-Minister of Finance, the hon. member for Shelburne and Queens (Mr. Fielding), effected with the United States an agreement which was designed to create the greatest possible measure of free trade which could be introduced between the two countries. The Conservative party then deceived the people of Canada, and the people refused that agreement, to their great regret ever since. We know what took place at that time. The Prime Minister himself and other members of the Government went to the West and put the western people on their guard against trafficking with the United States lest they might lose their loyalty to the British Empire. The Britisher who cannot deal with another nation or another man outside of his country is not a British man. Britain has traded with every country in the world, and the men of the British Isles have never lost one iota of their loyalty by the increase of their trade. It was difficult to bring about a trade reform of that kind in a short time. We know what the principles of the protectionist party had been before that period. The workman had been educated to the theory that the particular industry to which he was consecrating his labour could not stand without protection. He was educated to the necessity of voting for his employer whose industry, he was told, would otherwise be ruined and his own employment would cease. That was the education given to the labour element in the first years of the protective tariff in 1878. The atmosphere was saturated with the poisonous gas of protection which restrained the energy of the people, and capital, or rather the privileged interests, took advantage of the lethargy of the workman to make him accept a low wage as a matter of charity, the workman being led to believe that it was by charity that he was being given employment. Therefore, it required some time to divert the trend of financial and economic education in Canada; but to-day I see that the workman of the twentieth century wishes to live the life of an intelligent

Christian citizen the world over. He wishes to enjoy life with his family and to educate his children as well as the professional man and the man of greater means is able to do. To reach his goal, he must have a certain wage, whatever that may be, he does not count that wage by the number of dollars, shillings, francs, or marks that he receives; he counts it by the purchasing power of the particular unit, and he is as well satisfied with three dollars a day if that three dollars can buy him as much food and clothing for his family as can be bought for six dollars to-day. He does not look for an excess of wages; he looks for a decent, Christian living. When I say Christian living I mean that when there is poverty there are bound to be abuses of all kinds, and the labour element will be discouraged; and it is the duty of the nation to see that the moral courage of the labour element in the country is sustained by a wage sufficient to warrant the workingman in living in that state in which he wishes and has a right to live and to bring up his family.

But even the Conservatives to-day, who are still clamouring for protection and who claim that our industries cannot survive without further protection, are not in sympathy with the principles enunciated by that great authority, Sir John A. Macdonald, who, in 1877, wanted protection for our infant industries. Those infant industries have now reached the age of forty. The infant who cannot walk at forty years of age should be put on some island by itself, and so the industry which cannot stand by itself after forty years of protection might as well be put into an asylum where there is nothing for it to do.

Mr. Speaker, with these remarks I wish to conclude by saying that I hope that the Government may be influenced to adopt a more patriotic attitude, and that we shall not be required, as the Minister of Customs (Mr. Sifton) has said, to wait another year or two for further consideration of the tariff. The Minister of Customs has promised us an inquiry by a commission composed of himself, the Minister of Finance and two or three other ministers. But this is something better than the tariff commission which has been suggested by some of the Conservative newspapers, namely, that we have an independent commission entirely free from politics. We have already had too many of these independent commissions with the shifting responsibility from the Government and really making the Parliament of Canada a chamber without authority, without function,