

THE TARIFF.

SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

April 9th, 1870,

BY

MR. J. B. PLUMB, M. P.

(From the Official Report of the Debates.)

MR. PLUMB said this debate had now taken a new aspect. To that aspect he proposed to address himself, in the remarks which he would have the honour to make to-night. After a long and extensive discussion on both sides of the House, the leader of the Opposition, representing the opinion, not only of the hon. gentlemen who followed him in this House, but of the great party of which he was the leader, of whose principles he was the exponent, had introduced a resolution which, without doubt, embodied fully, though concisely, the principles of the Opposition upon this floor, and the principles of the great party which that Opposition represented, for, although beaten at the polls, although represented here by a very small minority, they could not but accord to that great party a power in the country which it were useless to ignore, which it were rash in any way to reflect upon, and which must always be treated in any discussion in this House, or elsewhere, as a power in the Dominion of Canada. The resolution introduced by the hon. the leader of the Opposition was a resolution which, as

he had said before, embodied briefly what might be considered the gist of the argument against the policy of the Government. He (Mr. Plumb) would read it, as the commencement of his remarks. It read as follows:—

"That, while this House is prepared to make ample provision for the requirements of the public service, and the maintenance of the public credit, it regards the scheme now under consideration as calculated to distribute unequally, and, therefore, unjustly, the burdens of taxation; to divert capital from its natural and most profitable employment; to benefit special classes at the expense of the whole community; tends towards rendering futile the costly and persistent efforts of the country to secure a share of the immense and growing carrying trade of this continent; and to create an antagonism between the commercial policy of the Empire and that of Canada that might lead to consequences deeply to be deplored."

He might say that he would not want any better text upon which to speak, on this occasion, than that short, comprehensive resolution. He had said to his hon. friend who had brought in the tariff resolutions that the speech with which that resolution was accompanied was the very best commentary upon the propositions which he had submitted to the