

the general lines of their policy, what they propose to do on this mission, what they propose to do in any mission they may hereafter send to Washington. So far, the policy of the Government is only one mass of contradictions. We find one policy was announced in one Province, that even one policy was preached in one part of one Province and another policy preached in another part of the same Province. We have the President of the Council, formally and publicly, in the most emphatic manner, in reply to my own speech on the question, saying that he was opposed to reciprocity in natural products. We had the Secretary of State, a very influential member of the Government, also coming from the same Province, on the public hustings, severing himself from his colleagues and declaring that the McKinley tariff was a calamity to our country, declaring strongly in favour of reciprocity in natural products, and I believe he went further, and declared that if that could not be got in any other way, he was prepared to consider a proposition for the freest possible trade. Then we had the First Minister himself, ay, the First Minister, venturing to hold friendly communication with American citizens; we had him addressing a private letter to an American citizen, desiring this private American citizen to lobby individual members of Congress on this behalf, desiring him to tell them that the Canadian Government were prepared—I will read what he said :

“ That the Canadian Government is fully assured that the Parliament of Canada would be ready to take off all Customs duty of coal, ores and lumber imported from the United States, whenever Congress makes those articles free of duty.”

Now, Sir, we have a very pleasing proof of the harmony which prevails among the Cabinet, of the permanent and fixed character of their policy—that is what the hon. gentleman calls it. We have the Minister of Marine taking the First Minister to task publicly, and declaring that he was bound to reconstruct him, and that he would teach him not to trifle with the great interest of coal. Apparently the Minister of Marine did reconstruct him, for apparently the Minister is still in the Cabinet. Sir, we know perfectly well all over this country that there were private assurances made to men in almost every rural constituency, that the Government desired reciprocity. I have pointed out the language which was used in the press, and I have pointed to the excuse which was made by the Government for dissolving Parliament. We find them giving private assurances to certain men that they desired reciprocity, and making other private assurances to other gentlemen that they did not want reciprocity at all. We have the word of a gentleman well known to my hon. friends here, it was Mr. Cockshutt, I believe, of Brantford, who stated in my presence that he had assurances from six Cabinet Ministers that the Government would not have a reciprocity treaty at any price. Then we had statements made that the United States would not treat. Why, Sir, I suppose on twenty hustings I was interrogated to know whether there was any chance that the United States would treat. I was told by the friends and supporters of the hon. gentleman that there was no chance whatever of obtaining a treaty on any terms with the United States; yet these gentlemen declare that they dissolved the House in order that they might treat with the United

States. We were told by some of these hon. gentlemen that they were sure to get the McKinley tariff repealed. I have seen that assertion made in at least a score of the Conservative newspapers. And we were told by others, and, I think, we were told on the floor of the House, that the McKinley tariff was the best possible thing for Canada, that it would teach our people self-reliance, that it would open new markets, markets in the West Indies more particularly, and it was likely to redound in the highest degree to the benefit of this country. Lastly, we were told by the First Minister on several occasions that he was determined to stand by the old policy; and yet at the same time the aforesaid First Minister sends an embassy to Washington, which I have repeatedly stated will be an outrage, farce and mockery, if he is going to stand by his old policy. Then there is another result of this attitude which I commend to the attention of hon. gentlemen. The First Minister declared over and over again that all persons who favoured free trade with the United States were annexationists, he would make no exceptions whatever; no one could oppose his policy, no one could oppose him, I suppose, without incurring the pains and penalties of high treason. I recollect that the First Minister was good enough to intimate at Toronto that he was about to bring to trial certain persons who had presumed to contravene or interfere with the policy he was about to carry out; but the hon. gentleman did not find it convenient or expedient to carry that threat into execution. I called his attention to the matter on more than one occasion, but I fear he did not read my speeches with the attention they deserved, and the references escaped him. But what is the result? According to the First Minister all who favoured unrestricted reciprocity are annexationists. Well, if that be correct, the hon. gentleman knows that to-day a decisive majority in the Province of Quebec favour unrestricted reciprocity and support my hon. friend (Mr. Laurier), and, consequently, they are annexationists. If he will take the trouble to add the figures of the returns of the Province of Ontario, he will find a clear popular majority of the people of Ontario supported unrestricted reciprocity, and, therefore, according to the hon. gentleman's showing, they are annexationists. So, according to the hon. gentleman's logic and theory, he has brought things to this pass: that in the two great Provinces which constituted Old Canada, there is, to-day, a clear majority of annexationists. Now, I have this to say: I have probably quite as great objection to altering our form of government for the American form as has the First Minister; but if annexation should unhappily become a live issue, if annexation should become a question in the politics of this country, it is just such ill-advised language, such reproaches shamefully flung against others quite as good as ourselves, which may, and I should regret it extremely if it does, give life and substance in Canada to any such movement. I always felt, and I felt it from the first when the hon. gentleman and his friends adopted a slavish copy of the American high-protective system, that they had gone a long way to create an annexation feeling in this country; and I say this, if there be one mode more likely than another to prevent such a result coming about, if there be one mode to remove any temptation existing on the part of some