

up with this policy of protection. Sir, if there is any part of the Dominion which has the right to complain of the result of this policy of protection, it is the province of Nova Scotia from which the hon. gentleman and I come. There was a time when no man would rise in the province of Nova Scotia and question the wisdom of what was then called free trade; a revenue tariff. We understood then that the tariff meant a tax, and we all wanted the least tariff and the least tax we could possibly have. And though many who believed in that old faith had strayed away from it, yet, I am satisfied that to-day the great mass of the people down there believe that the best policy for the progress of the maritime provinces is that policy under which they enjoyed their greatest prosperity. That was a time when they had a tariff away below the figures of the present tariff. We do not deny, we do not question that you may, by a policy of high protection, as applied towards particular industries, divert men from the ordinary occupations, and you may be able to build up here and there favoured industries, but we believe that in the end, viewing the question from the standpoint of the whole country, the general good cannot be advanced by such a policy. We can take as an illustration of that, the county which the hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) represents. He has spoken of coal, and he has spoken of iron, and he has in that county of Pictou both of these industries. They have had coal mines in Pictou for generations. They had successfully carried on the coal-mining business long before the days of the National Policy. They have had the benefit of protection on coal, and they have had the benefit of this protected iron industry, but what do we find? Why is it that the maritime provinces have gone backward in their competition with the sister provinces, and with the world at large? Not only do the census returns show that the whole of the maritime provinces have retrograded, and that the province of Nova Scotia has virtually gone back, but the hon. gentleman's own county, after ten years of fostering by protection, had fewer people in it when the census of 1891 was taken than it had ten years before. What are the figures? Why in the census of 1891, the county of Pictou represented by my hon. friend (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper), had 35,585 people, and if his view be correct, if it is possible by this policy of fostering a few industries, if it is possible by a policy of protection to make a place prosperous, then the county of Pictou should indeed prosper. It had all the advantages of coal protection; it had the iron industry; it had whatever advantage the hon. gentleman was able to give it in the way of patronage and in the building of railways; it lived under favoured conditions, so far as protection was concerned; and yet its population fell

from 35,585 at the beginning of the ten years down to 34,541 at the close, or 1,000 less. In the face of these facts, and they are but simple facts, it is nonsense for the hon. gentleman to hold up to the people of the maritime provinces the idea that a protective policy is sound. What the people of the maritime provinces want is that we shall get back to the good old days of a low tariff, the policy which enabled us to trade with the world; and if we set our faces in the right direction, and gradually, so as not to disturb too much the established industries of the country, travel back to the principles which were recognized by the leaders of both political parties in the old days, we may hope for the maritime provinces, and particularly for Nova Scotia, a measure of prosperity which has never been enjoyed since the National Policy began.

Mr. BELL (Pictou). I am rather surprised to hear the hon. Finance Minister (Mr. Fielding), with such warmth re-introducing into the public discussion of this country the rather hackneyed and I think the somewhat exhausted arguments drawn from the census. It does him a wonderful degree of credit as a debater that he is able to work himself into such a heat and such apparent sincerity in dealing with what may not incorrectly be called a long-exploded humbug.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I am dealing with the hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper).

Mr. BELL (Pictou). The hon. gentleman was dealing with the census figures, and he must have known that in that sense he was dealing with a long-exploded humbug. If he made that speech in the county of Pictou, where the Liberals, though extremely loyal to him in the past, would know from their daily experience that there was no solid substratum of fact "in the statement he made, he would fail to arouse them to any such enthusiasm as he appears himself to possess. These census figures have always been disputed, from the fact that the people of the county of Pictou have been compelled to increase their educational expenses, to enlarge their school-houses, to employ more teachers, and to take all those steps which are called for by an increase of population. The fact is that the county of Pictou, and indeed the maritime provinces as a whole, have prospered, and the people believe that they have prospered under the system of protection. It is true, during the election that is just past, the people of Nova Scotia, or one-half of them at least, have voted for gentlemen who support the present Government and the Finance Minister; but I have had the assurance of electors of the county of Pictou within the last three days that pledges were given by the Liberal candidates there that if they were elected they would support the Na-