

strong in empty and meaningless resolutions in favour of adequate protection. But, by and by, the agitation on the tariff question was crystallized, and this government after careful effort brought down a revised tariff. That was the moment to hear about adequate protection. Prior to that it was a mere abstract question, but now it has become concrete; the government laid their tariff policy on the table of the House and hon. gentlemen were invited to criticise it. What happened? These gentlemen opposite abandoned adequate protection and accepted the tariff policy of this government. Never was there a more complete surrender to the government in regard to the fiscal policy than that which took place when the last revised tariff was brought down. Hon. gentlemen opposite had no desire to continue the discussion; they were ready to close the debate and go on with other business, and if there was a tariff debate at all it was because some hon. gentlemen on this side thought they would like to avail themselves of the opportunity to speak on the question. But it is not only in parliament that hon. gentlemen opposite have abandoned the tariff question; it is not only here that they have flung adequate protection to the winds. The leader of the opposition, in the discharge of his duty—it was very proper that he should do so—recently made a tour of western Canada. When a party leader goes through the country to discuss public questions one would naturally expect that as there are greater questions and minor questions, he would give the more important questions priority. But, turn to the Toronto 'News,' to the letters of Mr. C. F. H., who cannot be regarded as a gentleman hostile to the leader of the opposition, who in fact is known to be in close sympathy with my hon. friend, and who always manages to say a good word for the leader of the opposition and his policy. In his summing up in the Toronto 'News' of the whole tour of the hon. gentleman in the west, 'C. F. H.'—though I have not the paper at hand, I think I can give the exact words—said: 'Two very delicate questions were for the most part skated over'—what were they? 'the tariff and the Northwest school question.' Why, Sir, if any man in this House, any man on this side of the House at any rate, were asked to state what were the two biggest questions that have engaged the attention of this parliament since the general election, he would say that they were the tariff and the Northwest school question; and yet the hon. gentleman, in the whole of that tour out west, of which his friends have said so much, confined his talk to all sorts of little questions. He talked of the Robbins Irrigation business a hundred or a thousand miles away from the scene of operations, but he did not talk of it at Medicine Hat where the facts were known.

Mr. FIELDING.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Does the hon. gentleman say that it was not discussed at that meeting?

Mr. FIELDING. No, but I said that the hon. gentleman did not discuss it.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The hon. gentleman knows that at some meetings I did not discuss the scandals at all, because that was done and done most effectively by my hon. friend from Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron).

Mr. FIELDING. And to which member of my hon. friend's distinguished party did he commit the duty of talking of the tariff and the Northwest school question?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I spoke of the tariff on several occasions.

Mr. FIELDING. For or against it?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. For or against what? Why, I pointed out that this government had paid the Conservative administration of the past the most tremendous compliment that ever was paid to any party by denouncing for eighteen years the national policy and then coming into power and adopting it.

Mr. FIELDING. My hon. friend forgets that when the tariff policy of this government was brought down and laid on the table of this House the leader of the opposition of that day, the old genuine Tory leader Sir Charles Tupper, did not call it the National Policy, but said he could hear the wail coming up from the people in the manufacturing industries of the country to condemn this policy. He predicted ruin and destruction as the result of this policy, which was not the old national policy, but the wicked device of the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues. But, as the years rolled on and that policy was vindicated throughout the country as it has been, a different story was told.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Might I ask my hon. friend a question? Did he or did he not, during the last session of parliament, when the tariff was under discussion repeatedly defend various items in it on the principle of protection?

Mr. FIELDING. The principle of protection has been in the tariff ever since I knew what a tariff was.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Is it there now?

Mr. FIELDING. It is there now.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Was or was not the principle denounced by the hon. gentleman's leader, and did his leader not promise absolutely to destroy protection?

Mr. FIELDING. He never did in my hearing.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Has the hon. gentleman never seen that statement in any reports of his leader's speeches?