

That this House is of the opinion that the welfare of Canada requires the adoption of a National Policy, which, by a judicious readjustment of the tariff will benefit and foster the agricultural, the mining, the manufacturing and other interests of the Dominion; that such a policy will retain in Canada thousands of our fellow-countrymen, now obliged to expatriate themselves in search of the employment denied them at home, will restore prosperity to our struggling industries, now so sadly depressed, will prevent Canada from being made a sacrifice market, will encourage and develop an active interprovincial trade, and moving, as it ought to do, in the direction of reciprocity of tariffs with our neighbours, so far as the varied interests of Canada may demand, will greatly tend to procure for this country, eventually, a reciprocity of trade.

I ask hon. gentlemen opposite if that resolution is clear and definite in its terms; I ask them if it is as clear and definite as the platform of the Liberal party? They cannot say that it is; not one of them will say that it is. Institute a comparison between the two, and you must admit that the Liberal platform is far more clear and definite in its terms than the resolution moved in this House by Sir John Macdonald. Examine that resolution from end to end, and you will not find the word protection in it, although the other day the hon. Minister of Public Works stated that the National Policy, the policy of the present Government, was protection pure and simple, as it was laid down in 1878. In that resolution you will not find the word protection; it is readjustment, fostering, encouragement—anything and everything but protection. There is nothing definite in the whole resolution from beginning to end. I do not give you that as my opinion merely, it must be the opinion of any person who understands the English language. I will read to you what Sir John Macdonald himself said in this House before he placed that resolution on the Table of the House, to show that he realized that it was vague, general and indefinite in its terms. The resolution was moved on the 7th of March, 1878. On page 853 of "Hansard" I find that Sir John Macdonald, speaking on the resolution, said:

It is not forced upon the Opposition to find a new policy with regard to matters of revenue and tariff and expenditure; they could not, of course, because they have not the power to do so. As far as matters of tariff are concerned, it is impossible for the Opposition to enter into details, or explain before the House and the country their policy; they have not the material; the Government alone have the opportunity, and the only opportunity, of collecting the facts upon which a tariff can be formed. The Minister of Finance has already informed you that, even with all the materials he has at hand, it is not an easy matter to form the tariff; and it would be presumption in the Opposition to attempt to do so. I shall, therefore, confine myself to general principles.

Now, is it not idle and useless and inconsistent in hon. gentlemen opposite to say that

the policy of the Liberal party is not definite and clear, when their own great chieftain, in moving the National Policy resolution, had to make an apology and give an excuse to the House for not being more definite, saying that it was not the place or the duty of the Opposition to define what their policy on tariff and revenue should be. Sir, that is not all. In the great campaign of 1878 which followed, the resolution was understood in one of the provinces to mean protection, and in another to mean low tariff. As the chieftain of the party knew that that would be the case, he no doubt purposely made it vague and indefinite. You remember that some months after this resolution was proposed there was a great agitation in the province of New Brunswick against any increase in the tariff. You will remember, the famous telegram sent by Mr. John Boyd, of St. John. Having a great influence in the councils of the Conservative party and knowing that the feeling in the maritime provinces, especially New Brunswick, was very strong against an increase in the tariff, he sent a telegram to Sir John Macdonald, and in reply the late chieftain assured him that the meaning of the National Policy was not the increasing but only the readjustment of the tariff. Does that not show that the resolution was made purposely indefinite so that every one could interpret it according to his views? Yet hon. gentlemen to-day boast that their policy has never changed, that it is the same policy which was enunciated in 1878 and has been carried down to this day—protection pure and simple. In the face of their own records, resolutions and speeches, in the face of the declarations of their own leader, surely whatever other defence they may try to set up for the National Policy, they cannot say that their policy has always been the same. Failing to defend successfully protection, some hon. gentlemen opposite, for the last few days have resorted to the tactics of quoting garbled extracts from speeches delivered by some members on this side many years ago, in order to prove that they were at one time protectionists. This is a miserable way of defending their policy—this quoting of extracts from speeches delivered twenty or twenty-five years ago. But if hon. gentlemen opposite adopt these methods, we can follow the same tactics. Do you remember, Mr. Speaker, that in 1874, when the then Finance Minister raised the tariff of this country from 15 to 17½ per cent, that Sir Charles Tupper said: The hon. gentleman is entering the thin edge of the protectionist wedge by increasing the tariff 2½ per cent. Sir, the National Policy was to benefit and foster the agricultural, the mining, the manufacturing and other interests of the Dominion. So says the resolution. Well, so far as the agricultural industry of this country is concerned, I am not going to read you