

characterize them, are to-day preaching a crusade of free trade amongst the agriculturists of Canada, and expressing strongly the hope that the tariff to be introduced during the present session will be a free trade measure, though they know to the point of certainty that it will embody every principle of protection that has ever been in force in Canada. I therefore venture to say that the present session will afford to our Liberal friends probably a better opportunity than has occurred at any previous time though they have been many—to abjure the fiscal heresies into which they have fallen in the past, and to make frank avowal that the clap-trap which has been talked of from time to time was with the hope of deluding and securing the sympathy of the free trade party in the Dominion. I presume there is no law which will compel the Liberal party to observe the virtue of consistency between profession and practice, yet I would venture to say that public ethics should require such consistency on the part of any great political party. I venture to express the hope that the tariff measure will contain provisions which will enable the government to prevent the formation of trusts and combinations which so often grow out of undue and unhealthy protection. I also venture to hope that owing to the development of the western provinces, the government will adjust the tariff in such a way as to favour the agricultural industry in the west, and the many industries incidental to the settlement of that great country. There cannot be a properly revised tariff that does not take into consideration the dominant requirements of the country generally.

The legislation upon this subject must be for the benefit of the many rather than for the advantages of the few. However, all those expressions perhaps represent so much speculation in the absence of our having particulars of the tariff before us. The tariff will be laid upon the table of parliament in a few days, and the members of this House will then have an opportunity to discuss the details of it upon its merits.

There is another subject with which the address has dealt—and I might say has dealt with as modestly and as unostentatiously as the tariff—and that is the revision of our election laws. Owing to the unusual

prominence which, during the recess, was given to many of the electoral acts of the Liberal party during the last few years, public opinion has reached, I may say, that stage when it demands from the government legislation upon this important subject. I venture to say, hon. gentlemen, that not in the history of representative institutions has there been such a humiliating and debasing spectacle with reference to the violation of the electoral laws as we have found during the last six months before several of our judicial tribunals. In fact to such an extent has electoral corruption been carried on, that it may be said the wholesale violation of election laws has reduced the shock to a greater extent than if it had occurred in isolated cases. We boast of our free institutions, of the sacredness of the ballot, of our franchise, of universal suffrage, and of the voice of the people being the paramount force in government, but I venture to say that we are greatly mistaken, that this conception of the franchise is all a myth, a wild fantasy of the imagination, a mistake that the representatives of the people are elected by the votes of the people. The disclosures which have been made in the various courts of the Dominion have demonstrated that many representatives of the people are not elected, but declared elected by machinery. The machine has been set in motion, and with the result that the representatives who have been selected by the machine have by these instruments been declared to be the representatives of the people. Every conceivable villany has been resorted to in order to debauch the electorate and to rob the elector of the vote which he has honestly cast. It is hard to conceive of any human ingenuity which has been overlooked to rob the public of the franchise properly exercised. In fact I would be ashamed of my country if I thought the rank and file of the Liberal party had been parties to the electoral corruption which has been exposed during the last six months. I do not charge for a moment—

Hon. Mr. POWER—Would my hon. friend excuse me? He is indulging in specific charges. Would he be good enough to specify some cases in which these things have taken place.