

be done under the circumstances. But, Sir, while they have in years past sat at the feet of the Congress of the United States in connection with the trade question, I would ask them what advantage there has been to them, and what advantage there has been to Canada in their waiting these two or three months? Have they followed in the footsteps of their friends to the south? Have they learned any reasons from them in that respect? If they had so learned, instead of coming here to-day and announcing that they stood by the policy of protection, they would have followed the example of that great nation, and say: We have disregarded the principle of protection; we are now prepared to adopt a revenue tariff. Hon. gentlemen opposite laugh at that statement. The Democratic party went to the country upon a clear and definite issue. They said that a protective policy was a legalized robbery, a system which made the rich richer, and the poor poorer, and with the definite policy in their hand, appealing to the electorate of that great country, they were returned to power with an enormous majority. Hon. gentlemen opposite seek to screen themselves from following the American people in this connection, because Congress has failed to carry out the full mandate of the people; but if the Congress has failed to carry out the full mandate of the people, is that any reason why, if they are prepared to follow the American people in their dealing with this great question, they should not rather have followed the wishes and desires of the rank and file of the American people, the great producing classes, the farmer, the mechanic, the labourer; or is it rather better that they should follow the weakness of the Congress of the United States, and seek to still fasten upon Canada the policy of protection? The hon. the First Minister, in answer to the leader of the Opposition, stated that no public man in the United States had attempted to say that the hard times, the serious depression now afflicting that country, was attributable to the protective policy. I might delay this House at very considerable length in quoting from public men in the United States to show what was their position with regard to this question. I shall content myself with referring to two. The Hon. James B. McCreary, speaking in the House of Representatives, puts the matter in this way:

The marvellous prosperity which, according to Republican prophecy, was certain to follow the McKinley Act in 1890, proved to be a mirage full of disaster and distress. Like the apples of Sodom which turned to ashes on the lips, the fruits of the great Protection Act have been unsatisfactory, disappointing and disastrous to the people. Stagnated trade, reduced values, closed factories, failing banks, mortgaged farms, unemployed labour, suffering people and a depleted treasury, are some of the fruits of the law which we were told would be a blessing and a boon to all classes and all sections of our common country.

Again, the Hon. Claude E. Swanson, another member of Congress, refers to it in this way:

For over thirty years, under the pernicious system of a protective tariff, inaugurated and perpetuated by the Republican party, has the Government been unjustly and unfairly controlling the distribution of wealth. For the last thirty years this country has made marvellous strides in the increase of wealth. It has increased its wealth from \$16,000,000,000 in 1860 to about \$63,000,000,000 now. Never before in its history of the people have the people been more frugal, more energetic, more persevering, and more toiling. Never before has their labour produced more bountiful and abundant crops. But all this increase of wealth and production has been, not for the benefit of the great toiling masses, but for the favoured few to whom, under the operation of this pernicious tariff system, the Government has made the distributions. So flagrantly unfair and unjust has been this distribution under it that it is estimated that half of the wealth of this vast country is now owned by less than 40,000 people. Under the operation of this system stupendous fortunes have been created with a surprising rapidity. This system has created millionaires whose wealths exceed that of great and sovereign states. While it has brought abundant wealth to the few, it has brought poverty, distress, and want to the many. It has brought the farmer, labourer and mechanic to the verge of bankruptcy and despair. It has taken the earnings of the farmer and labourer and with them enriched the capitalist and manufacturer. It has reduced what the farmer has to sell far below the cost of production, and enhanced what he has to buy 50 per cent above its natural price. It has created the millionaire and the tramp. Under its disastrous effects the agricultural interest of the country over is practically paralyzed and destroyed. Imagination cannot conceive, reason cannot calculate the vast sums of money which this system has taken from the pockets of the farmer and labourer and placed into those of the manufacturer and capitalist. * *

* * * * * These dry figures tell us a story of wrong, deprivation, and robbery surpassing anything furnished by the annals of history. The great Napoleon in his wild career of victory and conquest never extorted from the vanquished nations which lay prostrate at his feet one-fifth as much as this Government through republican legislation has extorted from its own toiling citizens for the enrichment of its favourites. In these dry figures can be read the cause of the want, wretchedness, and despair of the great masses of the citizens to-day. They stand powerless and helpless under the immense and appalling burden which their own government has imposed upon them.

Mr. Speaker, if you apply these same words to Canada, they are true—not to the same extent in Canada, but why? Because Canada has not gone the full length in the line of protection that the United States has done and that has been its great safety in this matter. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that it was a conclusive proof that the Americans had not decided to do away with the pernicious principle of protection, that Congress was overwhelmed with deputations