

foreign nations, within a few years, all the money necessary to pay our national debt; it was not desirable, as held by Protectionists, that the amount of our importations should be reduced; on the contrary, importations ought to be encouraged; in a word, if this doctrine was true, there could be no such thing as Protection, because Protective duties, in that case, would fail to effect the purposes for which they were established. Anyone who would take the trouble of considering the logical consequences of that doctrine, would see at once its unsoundness, because to show the absurd consequences of a principle was to demonstrate the fallacy of the principle itself. It had been said, in the course of this debate, that Protection did not increase the price of commodities. If such was the case, he could not see the utility of Protection. Manufacturers asked for Protection, in order to increase and keep up the price of foreign produce, and to be thereby enabled to sell theirs at advanced prices; but, if Protection did not increase prices, he failed to see the reason why there should be a single Protectionist in the country. The whole argument could be summed up in the following manner:—If they admitted that Protection increased the price of commodities, they must also admit that it was detrimental to the interests of the consumer. If, on the contrary, they denied that fact, then they must confess that Protection was useless; therefore, Protection was either injurious or useless, and could not be beneficial.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

MR. BÉCHARD said that, when the the House rose, he had just concluded that part of his remarks wherein he was endeavouring to show that Protection could not be beneficial. He should now proceed to review another branch of this question. Hon. members in Opposition, particularly those from the Province of Quebec, had been taunted by hon. gentlemen on the Ministerial benches. They had been charged with being guilty of inconsistency with regard to this question, and, to prove that charge true,

MR. BÉCHARD.

reference had been made to opinions expressed by some distinguished members of the National party, who, according to report, had pronounced themselves Protectionists in 1872. Particular reference had been made to his hon. friend from Quebec East (Mr. Laurier) who was quite able to defend himself, and also to Mr. Joly, Mr. David and others. Admitting, for the sake of argument, this to be true with regard to some of those gentlemen, did it follow that their opinions should bind every man in the ranks of the Liberal party? Had those declarations ever bound the hon. member for Chateauguay (Mr. Holton) for instance, who, for more than twenty years, had been acknowledged as one of the leaders of the party? Let him tell hon. gentlemen opposite that the opinion of no mortal man, however distinguished he might be in the ranks of the Liberal party, could ever bind him to any particular course, with regard to any new question of public policy. But, if he wanted to retort the charge, he would have only to turn his eyes to the opposite side of the House, where he could see many hon. gentlemen, who, during their whole lifetime, had advocated the principles of a revenue tariff, and who had thought fit to change their opinions only two or three years ago. He could refer, in particular, to a very distinguished statesman in the Conservative party, Sir A. T. Galt, who, a few years ago, wrote a letter, which was quoted during the last two Sessions of Parliament by hon. gentlemen on the present Opposition side of the House, as sustaining their position on this question. He could, also, refer to another letter, published a little later, by the same distinguished statesman, and which was, at the same time, quoted by hon. gentlemen on the present Government side of the House, as sustaining their position with regard to the same question; and he should not be surprised if, within two or three years after the results of this tariff had been felt throughout the country, the same distinguished statesman should publish a third letter in order to harmonise the two preceding ones. But why should he not allude, for further demonstration of his proposition, to another distinguished member of the Conservative party now hold-