

to a protective system. True, they referred to protection on the hustings, but they did not openly support it in this House. The revision of the tariff was the only argument that brought about the overthrow of the Mackenzie Government. Well, when I consider what has since happened. I have a right to say: It is you, Conservatives, who have changed your policy. And the statements of Thomas White, of Sir A. T. Galt, who had been Minister of Finance, of Sir Hector Langevin who must have approved of the statement made by Sir George Etienne Cartier in Quebec, since he was his colleague in the Ministry, go to show that all your leaders were free-traders, and since 1878, you have gradually changed your policy. You never intended, in 1878, to force on the country a tariff as high as the one now in force; you began by making concessions to one manufacturer, then to another, and little by little and in proportion as protection brought these gentlemen to your camp, you have given us the high tariff which we now have. My hon. friend from Wentworth (Mr. Bain), in a speech as elaborate as it was eloquent, delivered this afternoon, stated that the origin of the Patrons of Industry was due to the policy of the gentlemen opposite. I will add nothing to what he said in reference to this question; but let me call the attention of the House to the fact that the working classes also formed themselves into associations because the policy of the Government is not acting fairly towards them, because it gives them no work. They say the country is prosperous; that it is flourishing. Have they forgotten the labour demonstrations, in the months of January and February last, in Montreal? Have they forgotten the like demonstrations in Quebec? Let me quote here, Mr. Speaker, what the newspaper "La Presse" published on the 26th September, 1894, in consequence of a despatch received from Quebec under the head:

NO WORK—PAINFUL SITUATION OF THE WORKING CLASSES IN QUEBEC.

We find in a Quebec newspaper the following description of the painful condition in which happen to be several working classes of that city:—

The workmen are not looking without fear at the coming of the next season. No works of any importance are talked about, except the proposed enlargement of the Château Frontenac, and thousands of men of all trades have been out of work for weeks and weeks.

Many will begin winter without any wood in the shed, without any bread in the chest, and having for all provisions arrears with the grocer and butcher.

Some of our leather establishments, such as Félix Gourdeau's, Bilodeau & Lamontagne's, Racine & Dion's, are closed down, and some others only keep open to conceal appearances.

True, there is the electric light station, on Prince Edward Street, and the new building of the cotton manufacture at Sault Montmorency,

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but it is only a mouthful to divide among a thousand people.

People are asking whether the time has not come for the public bodies to think about it, and start some extensive works. Our city council could perhaps consider the question of the building of the new city hall.

Such was the position in which stood the working classes, last fall and winter, in the cities of Montreal and Quebec. So I may assert that they are not now in favour of the fiscal policy of the Government. Let me quote, in support of the foregoing observations, a few statements taken from the report of the proceedings of the Trades and Labour Congress, held at Ottawa, during the month of September, 1894. We will see what they thought of our combines, as well as about the Conservative policy:—

It is not necessary for me again to call your attention to the many vital interests of those you represent, demanding, as they do, your most earnest and intelligent consideration. It is not only your particular organization and their interests, but the interest and welfare of the great masses of our country that we seek to improve and further. Particularly in these most trying times of depression is it necessary that we devote our minds to an intelligent consideration of the causes that have led to the very undesirable and far-spread distress and misery at present existing in our midst, and existing to a greater extent among our brothers to the south of us. The concentration of wealth in the grasp of a few has and is developing a power that, unless a halt is called, will inevitably lead to a more hopeless degradation of the workers than even at present exists.

Such is, according to this report, the cause of the destitution prevailing among the working classes. Such was, from a general standpoint, the policy of the Conservative party with respect to its results, as far as the farming community is concerned, and such is the opinion of the working classes about our extreme protective tariff, as expressed by their representatives in Congress assembled. Now, the present ruling party may be qualified the corruption party, corruption of which they gave us so many instances in the management of the public departments during these last years. I was surprised to hear the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), in his attempt to show that the Liberal party is not as pure as the Conservative party, because the Conservatives had less elections controverted and voided than the Liberals. Mr. Speaker, it is no difficult thing for the hon. gentlemen opposite to controvert an election. We know what are the means at their disposal. To controvert an election, they have only to apply to some of the big government contractors, to some of the big railway contractors, or to the contractors for public works given by the Government, and they are sure to get the necessary thousand dollars to make the deposit required in controverted election trials. This is how they were procured with the required money, while we, of