

the General Election of 1872, the policy that had animated the Conservative party, the policy that had been so eminently successful in the promotion of the prosperity of Canada, was heartily endorsed by the people at the polls. But, Sir, these hon. gentlemen failed to secure the people at the polls on a policy of their own, and they adopted a system which is a favorite mode of operating with them—intrigue; and thus they succeeded in obtaining power. I say, Sir, that this was an unhappy hour in the interests of Canada, for I need not remind the House, Sir, that from that hour down to the time when they were dismissed from the positions for which they proved so thoroughly unequal, the fortunes of Canada were surrendered to hands utterly unequal to the occasion. They succeeded to power with an overflowing revenue; they succeeded to power with the trade, the business and the revenue of the country in the highest possible state of efficiency, and I need not tell the House, Sir, what the lamentable record of that five years of misrule was, during which they supplanted the protectionist policy which had been the policy of Canada down to that time, and introduced a policy of what they called out-and-out Free Trade—at least, to as large an extent as they could adopt it. Well, Sir, they have said on more than one occasion—I do not know, however, that the matter is very important—that my hon. friend the Minister of Finance and myself, as well as other hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, were formerly Free Traders. They have said, Sir—and they have endeavored to establish on various platforms and occasionally in this House the fact—that formerly my hon. friend and myself held different sentiments in reference to this great issue from those which we now entertain. I say, Sir, that the history of the past will fail to establish any such proposition. I do not, for a moment, hesitate to avow that when I was in the Government of Nova Scotia, and when I had the honor of occupying a position in the Legislature of that Province, I was a Free Trader. My policy was that of Free Trade, and why? Because it was utterly impossible for a small community of less than 400,000 people, situated as we were, without the means of obtaining a market outside of our own borders, even among Canadians, for any but a Free Trade policy to be adopted; but, Sir, hon. gentlemen opposite know little of the discussions of the past if they do not know that my hon. friend and myself took our ground in our respective Legislatures of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick strongly and clearly on the advantage of having all these Provinces united together in one great Confederation, and that one of the leading grounds on which we urged this change was, that it would enable a policy that