

continued to work for this mutual preferential trade. My conclusion is that if Canadians really desire this most desirable thing they must put the Conservative party in power. I think that is the only conclusion to be reached, because we find that the Liberal party look on this idea as absurd, they look on it as impossible, they say they will not ask for it, and I believe if it was offered them they would not take it, because they say they do not believe in the principle of protection at all.

Mr. Speaker, I have presented the views of the leader of the government. If I quoted the views of some other members of the government it might be said they were not binding on the party. But I think it will be admitted that the views expressed by the leader of the government when in opposition are binding on the Liberal party, and that the views he expresses to-day are binding on the Liberal party. They cannot say that he does not express the views of the party, I think he does express the views of the party. If these views on this question are not the views of the party, then the only thing for the members of the party to do who do not agree with them is to leave a party that looks on this great thing as impossible of attainment, and join a party which thinks it is possible, and which is determined to do all in its power to obtain it, and which looks forward to the next general elections with hope that the country will put them in power, and install a government which will work for the best interests of the country, untrammelled by any theories and looking only to the interests of Canada.

Mr. PETER MACDONALD (East Huron). We have heard these tales so frequently that really I am getting tired. The statements made by the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat have been so frequently made that I think they should by this time have something else to tell us. He still insists that the Liberal party are inconsistent, that they have no fixed principles. Now, I think it is Emerson who says, in one of his essays on self-reliance, that consistency is the hobgoblin of weak-minded people and weak statesmen. He says that great men and great statesmen pay no attention to consistency, because on one day they speak out boldly their opinions and principles upon the conditions which prevail on that day, and on the following day they speak out just as boldly their opinions and their principles upon the condition of things that prevails on that day; and therefore, although the opinions may be different on both days, they are not inconsistent, because the conditions have wholly changed in the interval. Now, Sir, that is exactly the case in which the Liberal party of the country is to-day. Eight or ten years ago the conditions were such that we, in our wisdom, believed that wider and

freer trade relations between this country and the United States would result in great advantages to both countries. We expressed our opinions at that time in view of the conditions which prevailed at that time. But the conditions have largely changed, and consequently our opinions have largely changed. If we expressed the opinions which we hold to-day as applying to the conditions which prevailed eight or nine years ago, we would be inconsistent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to follow the hon. gentleman through his meanderings in regard to our so-called inconsistency upon the trade question; but I will only say that the conditions which prevailed eight or ten years ago do not at all prevail at the present time. Eight or ten years ago our principal market was in the United States of America. The Americans were unkind enough to pass almost a prohibitory law against the introduction of Canadian products. First, there was the McKinley Bill, and afterwards the Dingley Bill, imposing heavy duties upon barley, upon cattle, upon eggs and upon many other articles which I might mention. We told the Americans that if they did not give us reasonable conditions for reciprocity we could live without them. Then we turned our attention to establishing markets for Canadian products in Great Britain, and we have succeeded in doing so in a large measure. Canadian farmers who found themselves shut out of the American market for their barley, had gone very largely out of the growing of barley in the province of Ontario, and forced the American brewers to adopt other articles for the manufacture of pale beer, which they had formerly manufactured from Canadian barley. At present the better class of our cattle go much more largely to Great Britain than they did at that time. Therefore, the conditions have changed in these ways, so that a reciprocity treaty would not be so advantageous to Canada now as it would have been eight or ten years ago. At that time we sent nearly all our eggs to the United States, but since then we have succeeded, through arrangements made by the government, in sending our eggs in cold storage, and in placing them on the British market in prime condition. We have established that market, and, therefore, we do not require the American market to the same extent as we did eight or ten years ago. These are some of the conditions which have come up. Would it be reasonable that we, with these changed conditions, should hold the same opinions exactly as we did on the reciprocity question eight or ten years ago? But, I intend to speak to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the House, upon a question which I deem of very great importance. Some few weeks ago I dealt with a question of national importance, namely, the transportation question. I am going to speak to-day