

people is always in order. The hon. gentleman says he does not say that the country was taken by surprise, but I say this, that if any party were taken by surprise, it was the Conservative party; because they never had any intimation, or an inkling of any kind from any member of the Government that there would be a dissolution. But according to my hon. friend, we were going to postpone the dissolution to the Greek calends. He says there ought not to have been a dissolution until the Franchise Act was repealed. That Franchise Act was an Act of the Canadian Parliament, and does the hon. gentleman mean to say that there should be no dissolution until the party in power, the party having the majority, should repeal the Act which they themselves laid before the country, and which Parliament and the country have approved of? Then the hon. gentleman says there should have been no dissolution until the law respecting the elections was altered, and until the frauds, the disgraceful frauds, which were practised under that law were made impossible. Who passed those laws, Mr. Speaker? It was the Government of Mr. Mackenzie; and if there were any frauds under them, those frauds were in consequence of the imperfections of the Act introduced for the purpose of preventing the occurrence of any such frauds. Now the hon. gentleman is very much pleased to ring the changes upon the word "loyalty." He says we are very loyal men in phrase, but look what we do: We have actually sent the mails by way of New York. We have, utterly regardless of our position as British subjects, utterly regardless of our oaths of allegiance, utterly regardless of our pretension of being the loyal party—and we do pretend and contend that we are the loyal party—forgetful of all our pretensions, we have sent the mails by way of New York. Well, the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the lines running from Canada are rather antiquated; they are too conservative in their practice; and the Government of Canada have spared no pains, and have run some risk in asking Parliament to vote half a million of money, in order to get a line to run from the St. Lawrence in summer and the Maritime Provinces in winter that will equal in every respect those lines which are the glory and the pride of New York; and if we have failed in carrying out that arrangement it is not our fault. We did make a provisional arrangement, but the state of the money market in England has been such that we have hitherto not been able to succeed in getting a contract. But that is going to be, I hope and believe, of very short continuance; and with the vote that Parliament has already given us, I hope and believe—I might almost say I know, although that is too strong a word—but I hope, and believe, and trust, that we shall have a line of which we may be proud, and which will relieve us of the charge of disloyalty brought by the hon. gentleman. The fact is that the steamers, which were originally equal to any of the lines which ploughed the Atlantic, have become antiquated, and the owners of those steamers did not feel themselves able to undertake the work of competing with the lines running into New York. The consequence is that for some time a large proportion, somewhere near two-thirds of the mail matter, going from Canada and coming to Canada, went *via* New York, and we were actually throwing away the money which we

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had been paying year by year to the Allan line, because it did not, and was unable from its lack of speed to perform the duties for which it was originally subsidized. That, Mr. Speaker, is our disloyalty. But, returning for a moment to the question of dissolution, the hon. gentleman says that we never announced what our policy was, and he says that our policy is a shifting policy. If ever there was a permanent and fixed policy it is that of the party of which I, for the present, am the leader. We went to the country, Mr. Speaker, on that policy,—the old flag, the old policy, aye, and the old chief. And with all my sins of omission and commission of twenty years, the country responded to the call. The hon. gentleman says that we are a minority in the larger Provinces. We are not a minority in the Province of Ontario.

Mr. LAURIER. Not much to boast of.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. In the Province of Ontario, of which I am a representative in this Parliament and in the Government, we are in a majority; and if some of my friends—and I regret, deeply regret the fact—have fallen in the field of battle, most of them believe and know that they will have a joyful resurrection. The hon. gentleman says that in my manifesto I did not say a word about unrestricted reciprocity. Why, there was no necessity for me to say a word about it. The hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) said enough about it. The whole country knew that the attention of the next session of Parliament would be absorbed in the consideration of that great question. Hon. gentlemen opposite travelled from one end of the Dominion to the other announcing unrestricted reciprocity as their policy. They called the attention of the country to the necessity of an immediate change to save this country from ruin and all the rest of it. They announced from every hustings, on every platform, on every stump they could find to stand upon, that unrestricted reciprocity was a matter to be considered in Parliament and in the next session of Parliament. And, Mr. Speaker, we knew that; and we knew also that a door had been opened for a friendly series of communications with the American Government on that subject, and that, for the first time in many years, we would have an opportunity of discussing the various questions—not only the trade questions but the various other questions which disturb the harmony between the United States and Canada. So long ago as November last we had the first intimation; and upon that—trying to open communication and knowing that all those communications would be fruitless if held in the last days of the last Parliament—we took the course of appealing to the people, and the people responded to our appeal. It is true that in some of the constituencies of Canada we have been defeated—not by the National Policy, but by the McKinley Bill. Some of our agricultural friends were naturally alarmed at the exclusion of their products from the American market; and through their not being fully instructed on this question, we, and not hon. gentlemen opposite, lost by the dissolution. Some of our agricultural friends fancied that in consequence of the McKinley Bill they would suffer greatly in the sale of their agricultural products; and it is said that in one or two places, the day after the elections, when the defeat of unrestricted reciprocity was assured, some of the