

ists amongst players, and my hon. friend (Mr. Laurier) may use that argument with reference to the political situation, but as I have said, it will not satisfy the sober second thought of the people of this country who will see the indictment, who will note the answer, and who will not note it to the advantage or strength of my hon. friends opposite. My hon. friend (Mr. Laurier) has stated that the leader of the Opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) is a disciple of Talleyrand who gave it as his dictum that speech was made for the purpose of concealing one's thoughts. Well, Sir, if there is a gentleman in this House, who I think cannot be charged with concealing his thoughts, to whom the credit must be given—whether he be deemed to be on the right side of a question or on the wrong side—to whom the credit must be given of stating boldly and strongly his position, and taking the consequences of his statement; that gentleman is the hon. gentleman who leads the present Opposition (Sir Charles Tupper). And, if there is one man who typifies that doctrine of Talleyrand, and acts on it in his political life, and has always done so ever, it is my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

An hon. MEMBER. Try it again.

Mr. FOSTER. I mean the leader of the Government, the former leader of the Opposition. My hon. friends opposite have occasion once in a while to laugh at a mistake that one may make in language. They are quite welcome to that slight enjoyment. It may for the moment—

Mr. GIBSON. Of weakness.

Mr. FOSTER. Well, of whatever you please. It may for the moment induce a little jollity and disperse the coming clouds of depression, of which my hon. friend from Vancouver (Mr. McInnes) spoke yesterday, but it does not affect the argument, and it does not obscure the point which I am trying to make. Now, a man who conceals his thoughts by his words comes under one of three categories. He either has no convictions to state, or he has convictions but expresses them poorly, or he possesses convictions and does not want to state them clearly. I leave my hon. friend the leader of the Government, and I leave the House to judge to which of these categories he belongs. But I make this statement, that no public man in Canada has for the same period been able to float so long upon words, and simply words, out of which no definite and true meaning could be taken, and upon which almost any construction could be placed, as my hon. friend who formerly led the Opposition and to-day leads the Government in this House. But I want to say to my hon. friend that another period has begun in his life, and hereafter he must translate his

words into legislation, into deeds; and the test of the hon. gentleman will come when he has to leave the region in which he has so long airily floated, and has to come down to the hard matter-of-fact work of translating his opinions, his convictions and his thoughts, into the legislation and the administration of the country. The hon. gentleman has given an admirable instance of the way in which he appears to say something and yet says nothing, in a paragraph of the Address which is before me. It says:

The operation of the tariff will be made the subject of careful inquiry during the recess—

Now it comes—

—with a view to the preparation of such a measure as may,—

And we are on the tiptoe of expectation to know what kind of a measure it is, when he slants off into this expression:

—without doing injustice to any interest, materially lighten the burdens of the people.

There you are. Talleyrand himself would be nowhere with that sentence. It would so far outshine his great powers that he would conduct the rivalry no further. Why, Sir, that is a mere matter of opinion. The free trader could say: From my point of view, a tariff put in force on my principles would do injustice to no interest, and materially lighten the burdens of the country. The unrestricted reciprocity advocate, in which category nearly every hon. gentleman on that side of the House has come at some time or other in his life, might say: From my point of view unrestricted reciprocity, embodied in the legislation of the country, will not materially affect any great interests to its injury, and will materially lighten the burdens of all. And so every shade of tariff and fiscal belief could come under the hon. gentleman's phrasing, and be justified, no matter which might afterwards be framed into the matter and make-up of the tariff.

My hon. friend said, in justification of the very light repast which he had placed on the public table, that we had no stomach for a heavy meal. Well, Sir, after hard work I find one's appetite is sometimes apt to be pretty keen, and it is a great disappointment to hon. gentlemen on this side of the House to have the appearance of a table put before them, a beautiful mirage, as it were, and, when you come up to it, to find neither potatoes, nor salad, nor meat, nor any other thing that would satisfy one's hunger.

An hon. MEMBER. There is "Tarte."

Mr. FOSTER. Yes, but the "tarte" is not upon the table. Now, Sir, what is the reason the hon. gentleman gives for having no viands upon the table?

Mr. GIBSON. He is a prohibitionist.

Mr. FOSTER. Well, Sir, that remark is not very apropos, so far as the subject is