

of that lamented gentleman, secured better terms for Nova Scotia. I would like to refer him to another fact in connection with that point. Mr. Power, for some years after the era of Confederation the Liberal member for Halifax, speaking at a public meeting in Nova Scotia, from experience with, and observation of, both parties—while I admit he still adhered to the Liberal party and deprecated the idea that Confederation had been brought about—made this statement: "Nor have I any hope from a change of Government at Ottawa"—this was when the Government of the right hon. leader of the present Government was in power before—"nor have I any hope, he said, from a change of Government at Ottawa," as the leaders of the Opposition—referring to the hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Blake), the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie), and other leading men of the party—"have opposed, step by step, and inch by inch every concession made to Nova Scotia." I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the House, for having allowed me this brief period of explanation, and I thank the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Tassé), who I believe has the floor, for giving way to me for this short time.

Mr. TASSÉ. (Translation.) Mr. Speaker, when I heard the hon. members opposite bewailing, one after the other, in tones which were steadily becoming more and more doleful, on the woes of the country, indulging in the most gloomy predictions as to the future which lies in store for us, I have asked myself if we were not attending a celebrated meeting of the Constituent Assembly. On that occasion a great tribune was trying to impose on France a most excessively onerous tax, a tax which was to take from each individual one-fourth part of his income, and which, for that reason, has been called the "contribution of the fourth." And the great speaker beseeching France to meet the engagements which were then bearing down heavily on the country, concluded by these words: "Bankruptcy, hideous bankruptcy is at our door; it threatens to consume you, yourselves, your property and your honor, and during that time you are deliberating." Indeed, Mr. Speaker, my intention is not to compare the hon. members opposite to Mirabeau haranguing the Constituent Assembly on that occasion, but when I heard them bemoaning the country on its woes, I have asked myself if we were not really attending that celebrated meeting. Indeed, for the last few days, and even until a very late hour of the night, we hear of nothing but bankruptcy, we hear of nothing but misery, we hear of nothing but distress, laborers without work, wholesale expatriation and onerous burdens. Until now the hon. members who spoke had only evoked that spectre in the language of Shakespeare. It was to be the lot of the member for Lotbinière (Mr. Rinfret)—and I regret that circumstances have precluded my answering him at once—to lament in our own beautiful French language. His speech deserves more than ordinary attention, for it appears to me to be the true expression of the sentiments of the small *Pléade Rouge* which, on this same question, has reflected all the colors of the rainbow. The speech of the hon. member may be reduced to three main propositions, although these are somewhat swamped by numerous incidental remarks. In the first place, according to him and according to every Liberal who has addressed this House, even according to the hon. member for Digby (Mr. Vail), who has just spoken, protection has been injurious to the country, and has been a cause of ruin to Canada, and a cause of industrial and agricultural distress. Secondly, he has stated that our expenditure and our debt are increasing at an alarming rate; and thirdly, the construction of the Pacific Railway is being pushed too rapidly, in his opinion. But, up to this time, such statements have been contradicted in a manner so clear, so conclusive, that it may seem useless, at this advanced stage of the discussion, to undertake a refutation.

Nevertheless, as this speech is the only one which has been pronounced in French on the great question which is now occupying the attention of the House, I believe it is our duty to prove to our friends opposite that whenever they feel inclined to fire on the Government troops, there will always be some one ready to fire back, and sometimes with very good effect. Mr. Speaker, I have asked myself the following questions: Is it very true, from actual results, from the experience of the last few years, is it very true that protection has been a cause of ruin to Canada, a source of misery and source of financial embarrassments of all kinds? Yes, answer the members opposite; yes, answer the opponents of the Government; yes, answer all those who have become blind through party spirit, or who prefer abstract theories to the teachings of history. But against that opinion, which is that of a small minority, we have the opinion of the great mass of the electors, not only of a Province in particular, but of all the Provinces in the Confederation. We have, I say, the opinion of the manufacturers, of the capitalists, of the workmen, of the agriculturists, who, on two different occasions, in 1878 and in 1882, have upheld, by a very large majority, the principle of agricultural and industrial protection. Hon. members opposite say that we are in the midst of a crisis. Well, let us compare for a moment the situation of Canada in 1877-78 with the situation which the establishment of the protective system has given to this country. In 1878—nobody has yet forgotten that dismal date, that fatal date—our manufactures were closing one after the other; in all parts of the country there was nothing to be seen except laborers without work, clamoring, not as the Romans of old, for *panem et circenses*, bread and shows, but for bread and work, what is wanted by the workmen of Canada. A mournful pall shrouded the country; discouragement had taken hold of the stoutest hearts; and I, for one, will never forget the desolation which overwhelmed the city of Ottawa—a very melancholy picture, if compared to that which is to be seen to-day. What was the main cause of such an economical disaster? It can be easily explained. At that time we had no protection, our markets were almost wholly in the hands of our mighty neighbors, into the hands of the United States. The late hon. Minister of Finance himself had to admit that our Canadian market had become a slaughter market for American produce, and the only proof I want of that fact is the speech which he delivered as a Finance Minister, in 1876:

"We know, Sir, that when the price of American staples are high ours will be high also. When labor is dear in the United States it will be dear in Canada; when cheap, it will tend powerfully to make it cheap in Canada also. And it is no source of wonder that when the cost of production becomes small in the United States, it should react more or less unfavorably on persons engaged in similar manufactures on this side. I do not purpose at this present moment to enter fully into the discussion raised as to Canada being a sacrifice or slaughter market. But I must admit candidly that I have no doubt that the distress of our manufacturers has been aggravated, though I will not say to what extent, by this cause."

So that we have, from the hon. member himself, who was then Minister of Finance, the admission that one of the causes of the industrial crisis was due to the fact that the Canadian market was almost wholly under the control of our mighty neighbors, the people of the United States. I know very well that the hon. member for East York, not later than two years ago, during his visit to Scotland, at Greenock, told the inhabitants of that place that his defeat at the elections of 1878 was due to the fact that there had been in the country a succession of bad crops from the day on which he had taken the reins of the Administration. He said:

"Referring to politics, he said he assumed office in 1873. For five years following they had very bad crops, and the lumber trade was very low, the trade being altogether in a wretched condition. This naturally led people to propose new theories for the formation of happiness and the bettering of trade."