

eighteen years the party platform has given out with one sound, that when they came into power there should be a complete death to protection, and the leaders of the Liberal party, in their platform, in their speeches, in their resolutions in this House, have affirmed the same over and over again, that if they got into power they would wipe out protection. They have not yet removed that doubt and uncertainty by declaring explicitly whether they would carry their professions out or not, and so they leave the whole interests of the country in fear and trembling that they will fulfil their pledges. They have been in power nine months and there is still this utter and irreconcilable diversity between them, which makes it yet impossible for any man to say—judging from their statements—what they will do with the tariff. What is the consequence of this? It is that the business interests of this country are suffering, and suffering badly. I need only advance two or three points to make that clear. The revenue shows it. The revenue has been constantly diminishing, until, when it comes down to nearly the point that it is supposed that the tariff will be brought in, people who have great interests at stake in matters of revenue, hurry to take advantage of the time that is left them to get their merchandise out of bond, and to pay the duties for the time being rather than they should have to pay the duties which may accrue if the merchandise is not taken out now. The decadence of the revenue shows that there is this doubt and uncertainty. Sir, the newspapers that are upholding the Government have spoken strongly about it; and the "Globe" newspaper more strongly than any. On the 4th January, 1897, under the caption "An early session," the "Globe" said:

The reform of the tariff is perhaps the first question that calls for consideration. * * * The fixing of customs tariff is, of course, the most urgent of all the matters that the Government has to deal with. It is frankly admitted that, while the adoption of protection is one of the easiest of economic changes, its abandonment, in a country like Canada, at all events, is fraught with no small difficulty. But it is not unreasonable that the business community should like to know at as early a day as possible what the reduction is to be. The tariff is one of the prime factors in importation, and the basis upon which that will take place during the ensuing season will be of the first consequence to every merchant and trader in the Dominion.

While the uncertainty lasts, there will be a hesitancy about importing, and a hesitancy about buying from the importer—two conditions which will not tend to improve the business situation. The manufacturer, too, will be inclined to go slow, until he learns definitely about the tax on his raw material and on his manufactured product. If the former is to be reduced, he would feel inclined to lie on his oars until the era of cheaper raw material arrives. It is not necessary to go into detail. The hurtfulness of uncertainty in the business world is too well known to need illustrating, and, being well known, the new Gov-

ernment should be careful not to superadd that disadvantage to the other disadvantages under which trade and industry have been, and are, labouring—the necessity for bringing on an early session of Parliament and taking the country into its confidence as soon as possible.

The country above all things wants an early session of Parliament, and a Budget speech soon after the assembling of Parliament.

That is from the Toronto "Globe" on the 4th of January, 1897. January passed, February passed, most of March passed, and then the House got together. The House met on the 25th, when all these troubles and difficulties had been augmented and added to, and yet we are likely to be here for a month more without the voice of the Government being heard by the business interests of Canada as to what their fate will be in the tariff revision. The "Monetary Times" is not a party organ, and from a late issue of that journal, I read:

The universal cry that comes up from business circles in all directions, in almost all places, is of continued and most monotonous dullness. This condition of things settled down upon this country months ago, and has continued ever since, with blighting effects upon trade and industry, until the condition has become almost unbearable. The banks are experiencing the full effect of all this, and loudly complain of stagnation, want of enterprise, want of active demand for money, and diminished profits. This continues and shows no signs of abating. Failures are constantly occurring, many of them where they were least expected, and amongst those who were thought to be prosperous and doing well. * * * Our readers are well aware of the real cause of this wretched state of things, namely, the uncertainty as to tariff legislation.

And I find on looking over the columns of the "Globe," not in its party columns, for it has now discreetly ceased to say anything about this uncertainty and inability of its party to do what it sees its party is not able to do; that is, to bring down the tariff in good time. I find in the financial columns of the "Globe" of April 3rd, only last Saturday, the following:

Wholesale trade has not been so dull for many years, and no improvement is expected until after the tariff changes have been announced.

Now, Sir, there is no need for my reading from other papers to make that stronger. That is a sample not only of what is being said in the press, but of the cry that is coming from the business people. The same cry comes from the bankers, the producers and the merchants everywhere. The same cry comes up from all of them to the Government: end this uncertainty, stop our losses and give business a chance to recuperate. Here we are to-day, not only without the tariff, but without any prospect of the tariff being brought down. Why is this? They are unready to bring down the tariff, and if they are unready now, after announcing their principles for eighteen years, and after being nine months