

was the excuse given by the Government at the last session for not taking up the policy of tariff reform during last session? They said that during the recess they proposed collecting information and we did look to them, after all this inquiry, to produce a tariff that would stand for a considerable time to come, and when to-day they tell us that the present tariff is merely an instalment of something else, we can see that that is merely a device to cover their own disappointment. The speech of the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Richardson) was on the same line, condemning the Government very mildly for not doing justice to the great North-west.

The hon. gentleman gave some information why he spoke in this particular line. He declared that he would desire no better campaign literature to go back to his constituents with than certain remarks he was presenting to this House. This is the whole situation. As the House is aware, a protest has been lodged against the hon. gentleman, which will be brought to trial at the end of the present session, and he wishes to be able to say: See the independent stand I took in the interest of the farmers even against the interests of my own party. But the other portion of his speech was highly eulogistic of the Government. In effect he declared "With all thy faults, I love thee still." and desired the House plainly to understand that he would support the Government's policy at any rate. No person accused the hon. gentleman of desiring to oppose the Government by vote, no matter how much he might seem to do so by voice. The hon. gentleman, in the early part of his speech, read a poem by Rudyard Kipling touching the supposed concessions offered to the motherland. The poem was very fine so far as the sentiment was concerned, but its literary merits do not seem to be so highly regarded by the reviewers. The name will hardly be regarded as eulogistic by many Canadians, who are not enamoured of the name "Our Lady of the Snows" as applied to our country. It has rather a chilly suggestion about it, which would be more appropriate if made concerning the reception that the tariff will be given at the hands even of friends of hon. gentlemen opposite. The hon. gentleman read the poem nicely, and, no doubt, that made up for many of its other defects.

Now, the hon. gentleman made a remark that I think was entirely uncalled for. He expressed regret that Manitoba had not sent back a solid contingent in favour of the Liberal policy as a result of the general elections of 1896, and he gave as his reasons that Manitoba was practically taken by the throat and a full and free expression of popular opinion prevented by what he was pleased to term "wholesale ballot stuffing." It will be necessary for me to make some reply to that particular part of the hon. gentleman's speech. I feel like extending

Mr. ROCHE.

every indulgence to the hon. member for Lisgar in any statements he may present to this House on subjects of a political nature. The hon. gentleman's training as editor of the Winnipeg "Tribune" has not been conducive to placing facts in a fair, impartial and perfectly accurate manner before this House. As to stuffing ballot boxes in Manitoba, there were many charges, but how many convictions? Out of all the arrests—some eighteen or twenty, there was but one conviction, and that on the gentleman's own evidence. And that, if I mistake not, was not so much a case of ballot-stuffing. He initialled some ballots after the election, acting in concert with the stool-pigeon of the Liberal party, the man Freeborn. Freeborn was to take these to the Conservative committee, and try to levy blackmail, and, if successful, to divide the spoils with the deputy returning officer. But the Conservative committee refused to be blackmailed, and Freeborn handed over the ballots to the Liberals. And it was a strange thing that the bondsman of the man who was arrested was the Liberal candidate, Dr. Rutherford. There was only one conviction, and that is how it happened. But how would the hon. gentleman explain what has taken place in the same constituency within the last week or so. Another election took place in Macdonald, and the Conservatives did not put up a candidate. An old-time Liberal, Mr. Mackenzie, appeared as the Independent candidate, his opponent being Dr. Rutherford. The Conservative newspaper was in financial difficulties, its hands out on strike. The editor, without the knowledge of the proprietor, went to the committee room of the Independent candidate and offered, for a consideration, to come out in the paper in favour of the Independent candidate. The offer was indignantly refused. He then walked across the road to the Liberal committee room and made the same offer to come out in favour of Dr. Rutherford, and the offer was immediately accepted. That is the difference between the two parties. And that very night, the type already set up was brought in from the Liberal office and thus the Conservative paper appeared with editorials in favour of the Liberal candidate. That in itself would not have been so bad, but that was not all. The Independent candidate had his election address in the paper, and some parties, acting in the interest of the Liberal candidate, actually forged a paragraph trying to leave the impression that the Conservatives had combined with the Patrons to support the Independent candidate. Ballot stuffing was charged against the Conservatives, but not proved. But here was a case of forgery on the part of some one in the interests of the Liberal candidate. Immediately the Independent candidate took steps to have the editor arrested, and he was arrested as he was boarding the freight train to skip