

beaten and almost annihilated on its most fundamental and distinctive question. Naturally, it and the leaders nominated by it had to stand aside, and allow the Liberal section to pass to the front. Though Mr. Blake and his followers were entangled in the defeat, and he has since used equivocal language in attacking the new tariff, he is not the enemy of Nationality or of Commercial Autonomy, but the reverse. In truth, he might, with some reason, have said that the National Policy was his axe, and had been stolen by the Conservatives when out of power to cut down the Mackenzie Administration.

Mr. Blake's title to his place, therefore, is necessity; to talk of intrigue is senseless. In judging of his performance as leader, allowance must be made for the difficulties under which he has laboured. It is a trite remark that lawyers have not succeeded in the British House of Commons. It would be wonderful if they had. How is a man whose mind is engrossed by legal business, and who is perhaps exhausted by a day spent in pleading a cause in a law court, to compete in the political debate of the evening with men exclusively devoted to politics, and coming down fresh from their libraries or their clubs? Mr. Blake's time has been given mainly to the profession at the head of which he stands. The inevitable consequence is that when he takes up the special subjects of the other arena a want of grasp sometimes appears. It is unlucky that tariffs and other economical questions should have been the first with which he was called upon to deal. If he can now afford to give himself wholly to politics, he will no doubt become as complete a master of them as he is of law. Moreover, he has some professional habits to shake off. The division of labour prevents any labourer from being a perfect man. It cannot be denied that so far Mr. Blake has had too much the manner of a standing counsel against the Government, speaking from a brief put before him, and too little that of a statesman looking into the heart of the matter and shaping his own course. His treatment of the Agreement was, in the opinion of the most friendly judges, altogether too forensic. But in this respect also he is sure to im-