

party, to dispute their right to offer to the electors of Canada the sharpest and the severest criticism they know how to offer as to our dealings with public affairs during the past four years. All that I ask of them, all that I ask of you, is simply this: I ask of them that their criticism should be free from wilful misstatements, and I ask of you that you will give us that measure of fair play that you will examine for yourselves the statements which we make to you, and judge, after you have looked at the authorities which we will show you, after you have examined the proofs that we have to offer, whether or not we do indeed deserve the confidence of our fellow-countrymen, and whether or not it will be to your interest and profit to replace us in power for a second term.' Sir, I beg to say that I speak not merely as a politician, but I speak as a responsible minister of the crown; and I hope on this present occasion to make no statement to you for which I cannot give absolute proof; or where from the nature of the case, absolute proof is impossible, where I will not be able to give you good and substantial reasons for the statements which I may make to you to-night.

Canada's Financial Position.

Sir, on the present occasion I propose to deal with these three subjects in especial: I propose to deal with the question of the expenditure and the financial position of Canada. I propose to deal with the somewhat intricate and complicated subject of the preferential tariff in favor of Great Britain and its effects. And I propose, in the last place, to say a few words as to certain charges of corruption, as to certain charges of malfeasance, and as to improper dealings with ballots and other things of that kind, which have been pretty freely preferred against us by our Conservative opponents; and I may add a few words on the general policy, which, in my judgment, the Liberal party will do well to pursue in the future as well as in the past. Sir, I have noticed that it has been a very common trick of our opponents, particularly of late, to select certain disjointed sentences and certain disjointed quotations from the speeches of the various members of the Liberal party. They deal with these without the slightest reference to the context; without the slightest reference to the circumstances under which they were delivered; without the slightest reference to the changed position of the country, and indeed, to the changed position of other countries with which we have dealings, and on these they presume to found various charges of inconsistency, various charges of breach of promise on our part, and as I need not say also to bring forward—without much proof, however—various