

THE LABOR INTEREST.

Then, with regard to the labor interest. Mr. Preston, the member for Brant, introduced a resolution providing, among other things, that men working for contractors in the employ of the contractors on railways, which should receive Government aid, should receive proper and sufficient rates of wages. The Opposition endorsed the proposition, but it desired to add to it. We said, we are in favor of this proposition that these laboring men shall receive proper and sufficient rates of remuneration, but we want to add something, and consequently I moved, seconded by Mr. Matheson, that the following words be added to the resolution:—"And that the opinion of this House in these respects be embodied in an Act of the Legislature." We wanted to pin that down at once, then and there. The proposition of the Government was a mere expression of opinion. We said, let us have the courage of our convictions now, and let us put an Act on the statute book which will carry them out. But no, the Government felt it to be their duty to vote it down, and one of the members of the Government said (he did not stand on his feet and say it), but he said, we are not going to allow you to pass anything like that.

That shows the moving spirit which actuated these people, and it shows, too, so far as I have gone at any rate, that the desire of the Opposition in the Legislature was to not only declare what was right, but also to crystallise it into an Act of the Legislature so that there should be no going behind it.

Then Mr. Crawford, of West Toronto, introduced what was practically the English law in regard to workmen's compensation for injuries, which received the greatest possible care at the hands of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and other great men of Great Britain before it was submitted to the House of Commons. When Mr. Crawford moved the bill, based upon that—and it was practically that adapted to our circumstances—there was a great outcry raised from the Government benches, and they would have none of it. So far, then, our record with regard to the labor question is one of which we need not be ashamed at any time. (Applause.)

And still they say we have no policy!

MANHOOD SUFFRAGE.

Then, with regard to the great and important question of manhood suffrage, which we have now. In 1885, the present Sir William Meredith, who was then the leader of the Opposition, moved this amendment to a bill:—

Mr. Meredith moved, seconded by Mr. Morris, on March 24, 1885:—

"That the following words be added to the motion, and while assenting to the second reading of the bill, and thereby to the principle that an extension to the franchise is necessary and expedient, this House desires to express its opinion, that no such extension which does not, under a proper system of registration, and while excluding the criminal and non-sane classes, aliens, and persons disqualified under the provisions of the Election Acts, confer the franchise upon every other male resident of the province of the full age of twenty-one years, ought to be adopted by this Province."

That amendment was voted down by the Government, and four years afterwards, in 1889, the very self-same amendment was adopted by the self-same Government and put upon the statute book, like man's other suggestions which emanated from the very same authority. (Applause.)

And still we have no policy!

Right here I desire to mention the matter of complaints in the public press on behalf of certain clergymen in the province who move from one place to another in the month of June in each year or thereabouts. This hardship has occurred, that having regard to the time the voters' lists are made out it very often happens that these clergymen are rendered ineligible to vote in the place they left, and also in the place they have gone to, and it was, and is, a grievance,