

SIR RICHARD'S DAY

The Opposition Financial Critic Makes a Show of Mr. Foster's Fallacies.

Truth About the Results of the Course Pursued by the Tory Government.

What the Country Would Gain by Honest and Economical Administration.

Ottawa, Feb. 7.—Yesterday in the common was certainly Sir Richard Cartwright's day. The worthy knight from South Oxford, to use his own expressions, spoke for two moral hours. Then the house went to dinner and returned again at eight o'clock to listen to Sir Richard again. If the speech was long, there was not a dull passage in it. Friends listened with undiminished admiration; opponents always listened with attention if not with pleasure or approval. However, in this latter respect Sir Richard could not reasonably be disappointed or surprised. He was not speaking for the entertainment of approval of the occupants of the government benches. He was attempting to confound them out of their own mouths, for the speech was a criticism of Hon. Mr. Foster's budget of Friday last. On that occasion Sir Richard replied to the minister of finance, briefly dealing with the general matters connected with the trade policy and the material prosperity of the country, reserving his review of the details and specific statements of the budget until he had given it that attention it deserved. Thursday was government day, and the budget debate was the first order. Having moved the adjournment of the debate on Friday, the floor was Sir Richard's. He began his address at 3:45 o'clock and had still much to say when the house rose at fifteen minutes to six. There was a large attendance of members, and the attention given to Sir Richard was all a speaker could desire. Hon. Mr. Foster followed him closely, as a number of interruptions and explanations clearly showed. Sir Charles H. Tupper was at his desk and made copious notes, thereby giving notice to the house that the criticism of Sir Richard would in turn be criticized by the ex-minister of justice, the Prince Rupert of the commons.

At the outset Sir Richard indulged in a little humor, at the expense of the Hansard reporters. As a rule, the work of the staff is excellent, for which they deserved the highest praise. But mistakes would be made even by the best of men, and in the past there had occurred several ludicrous ones, which he quoted in the report of his speech of Friday.

"I recollect, no very long time ago, I had occasion to refer to the political Styx, and I found, to my horror, that the reporter had made it 'political stinks.' (Laughter.) On another occasion, when I had quoted, in the same connection, the words 'Strike, but hear me, as Themistocles said,' I found, to my amazement, that I was reported as having said: 'Strike, but hear me, as Peter Mitchell said.' (Renewed laughter.) 'These things I have borne like a man, but I am obliged to say one must draw the line somewhere, and when I took up Friday's Hansard I found that I was represented as having supplanted the older Sir Charles Tupper for a subscription for myself and the Liberal party.' (Laughter.) I felt I could not stand that. (More laughter.) Why, Mr. Speaker, it would not require my parliamentary experience to know that no human being could well go in a more hopeless quest than to ask Sir Charles Tupper the elder to give a portion of his hardy career or perhaps to should say hardly won—gains for the benefit of the Liberal party. (Laughter.) And then, too, I felt that there was imminent peril if this thing went uncontradicted, that we should have cablegrams speeding across the Atlantic, and the English journals reporting that the reason our party attacked Sir Charles Tupper was that he refused to make a fair division of the spoils. Sir, this is a grave and serious matter. (Laughter.) Here I am reported, on behalf of myself and the Liberal party, addressing Sir Charles Tupper and saying: 'Give us gold.' I need not say that no such thought ever crossed my mind, and no such words ever crossed my lips. Why I did say, 'Give us gold, our good old Sir Charles' (laughter), and that I said without disparagement of my hon. friend from Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) for whom I have always had a very strong sneaking liking—more particularly since he began to devote his talents to antiquarian research. (Renewed laughter.) Now I am bound to say for myself that I never entertained the smallest or faintest idea that Sir Charles Tupper, who is now reported to us, thanks to my prayers and those of the Bishop of Antigonish (laughter)—I never entertained the slightest idea that he would celebrate his return in knightly fashion, by distributing largesse on this side. (Great laughter.) I desire to be corrected in this matter, and I hope that the misrepresentation will disappear very shortly from the Hansard.

Preliminaries being disposed of Sir Richard took up the battle axe of his figures and eloquence, and proceeded to assault the financial citadel of the government in true parliamentary style. Hon. Mr. Foster's speech certainly possessed one merit, if merit it be, and that was a remarkable disregard of facts. The minister of finance had a large deficit, the largest of any year except that of the year of the North-West rebellion, and none knew better than the minister how grim and ugly a thing a deficit was. He had also to face the cheapness of the articles Canadians had to sell, and the futile attempts to obtain new and adequate markets. The British market was practically closed to their cattle, and was likely to be closed to another of their exports; their population was about at a standstill; the public debt increasing, and notwithstanding these facts the minister had

presumed to assume that the people were prosperous. Mr. Foster's policy seemed to be to shut his eyes to the debt side of the account, and to twist those on the credit side so they would do better service than the truth justified. In the teeth of increased taxation, a growing debt, and a grim deficit, the minister was ready to plunge the country into far-reaching engagements and add more to our debt and expenditure. The budget speech was then taken up and analyzed, as Sir Richard called the process. Mr. Foster had claimed that our exports having exceeded our imports, the balance of trade was now in our favor. This doctrine, Sir Richard did not think important, but if it were, the trade returns did not bear it out.

Sir Richard Cartwright—Now, I want to call the attention of the house to our trade and navigation returns. I find in them that our total importations for the year 1895 is \$105,252,000 of goods entered for consumption. I find that our total exports of Canadian goods, including coin and bullion, amounted to \$103,083,000; whereas it would appear that so far from having an excess of exports over imports, that he is benefited, there was really an excess of imports over exports of \$2,200,000, contrary to the hon. gentleman's statement. Mr. Foster—I think my hon. friend will allow me to draw his attention to this one fact. As he puts it, he leaves

the impression that I have made a mistake. Sir Richard Cartwright—Not a mistake, but a mistake. Mr. Foster—I find my hon. friend will look on page 7 of the trade and navigation returns he will see that since confederation our balance of trade was equal. The balance as regards imports and exports has been calculated all through upon the total exports and the total imports, not taking into account what is simply the produce of Canada or what is not taking into account either the bullion or coin on either side, and the figures that I have stated are perfectly correct.

Sir Richard Cartwright—I thought the hon. gentleman would take refuge in that statement. Mr. Foster—I beg my hon. friend's pardon. He has no right to imply that I am seeking refuge. Sir Richard Cartwright—Well, I think I am. Mr. Foster—I think not. Sir Richard Cartwright—I do not think that is parliamentary, but if Mr. Speaker rules that it is so I will make use of another phrase. Mr. Foster—I do not object to its being unparliamentary, but I say that the idea implied in this assertion is an idea that ought not to be implied.

Sir Richard Cartwright—That is a little too fine. I think the hon. gentleman will have to sit under the implications. Mr. Foster—I will not sit still when you misrepresent me. Sir Richard Cartwright—You will have plenty of opportunities to correct me. Now this is rather an interesting point. The hon. gentleman referred to \$71,782,000, when our imports entered for consumption were \$71,782,000. Canadian exports in that year of our own produce were \$74,471,000. It was therefore perfectly correct to say that in 1880 our exports exceeded our imports and so far as there is anything in the balance of trade to which I myself, I may remark, attach no importance whatever—the balance of trade in 1880 was in our favor. Now, I would like to ask, when the hon. gentleman talks of the balance of trade, will he assert that if we had imported of foreign produce instead of ten millions say thirty millions, as we would have done if our Yankee friends had used the St. Lawrence to its full advantage, would he rise in his place here and tell the house that that was a balance of trade in favor of Canada of \$22,000,000.

Mr. Foster—I have simply this to say to my hon. friend, I have followed out the calculations since confederation from statistics which the trade and navigation returns, the controller of customs and ministers of finance, have supplied, and upon which alone you can carry out a comparison between the different years of the balance of trade. Sir Richard Cartwright—The Blue Books do not talk of the balance of trade. I am as well aware as the hon. gentleman that there was an excess of total exports, foreign and Canadian, over the total, not of those entered for consumption, but the total goods alleged to have been imported for all purposes. But I can point out to him that

that has nothing in the world to do with the balance of trade. I beg to point out to the hon. gentleman and the house that supposing, as I say, that if the returns show \$30,000,000 of American goods passed out by the St. Lawrence, that would not enable us to pay for the goods which are imported and consumed in Canada. The balance of trade means, if it means anything at all, that out of our own exports, or of the proceeds of our own exports, we are able to pay for all the goods we import and consume and have a surplus besides. All we can be said to get out of foreign goods passing through our country via the St. Lawrence, all that we can possibly get are the tolls, whatever they amount to, and the value of the freight that go in Canadian bottoms from Montreal to the point of consumption. I will put it to him a little plainer. Supposing the Chicago merchant chooses to send 1,000,000 barrels of flour via St. Lawrence and Montreal to Liverpool, does the hon. gentleman mean to tell us that the price of that 1,000,000 barrels of flour will go to help us to pay for imports consumed in Canada.

Mr. Foster—No, I would not. Sir Richard Cartwright—Well, then, how would it help our balance of trade now? Why could he not consult the Premier, who is an ex-minister of customs, of long experience, and who would have put him right on that question and



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prevented him from—I do not say abusing—but undoubtedly misleading the house by talking of having a balance of trade in our favor when in point of fact the balance—so far as there is anything in it—the balance of trade is \$2,250,000 against us instead of being \$2,257,000 in our favor. Sir, if the hon. gentleman is not satisfied all I can say is that I am afraid I shall have to refer him to my hon. friend from Kings (Mr. Borden) and my hon. friend from Brant (Mr. Paterson), who will no doubt endeavor to indoctrinate him as to the true balance of trade.

Mr. Foster—I am quite willing to discuss the question with my hon. friends at any time. Sir Richard Cartwright—Very well, does the hon. gentleman admit that if we send a quantity of foreign goods via the St. Lawrence they represent a part of our imports entered for consumption? Mr. Foster—Not necessarily. Sir Richard Cartwright—But at all. And if they do not it does not affect the balance of trade. It may be a very good proof and a very good evidence that we are benefitting by use of our water ways, and had the hon. gentleman congratulated us on that, I would have agreed with him. But when he talks of the balance of trade I must put it in a caveat. The balance of trade is against us to the extent of \$2,200,000 and not in our favor as he mistakenly supposes. Now I would say this is very like a mistake which the hon. gentleman made some years ago with respect to the quantity of agricultural products that had been gained for the farmers of Canada by the operation of the National Policy, and I think he had better in the future consult with my hon. friend the Premier, who will put him right on these interesting questions.

Sir Richard then dealt with the statement of Mr. Foster as to the per capita taxation of 1874-5, as compared with 1894-5, showing that it was only 8 cents greater than the average of the period from 1874 to 1878. All comparisons, said Sir Richard, between a protective and a revenue tariff were fallacious and misleading. Over and above the revenue of \$30,000,000 that goes into the treasury, about \$30,000,000 more finds its way to the classes under a protective system. That was not the way with a revenue tariff. For every dollar of taxation that goes into the treasury under protection three or four or five go to certain manufacturers. There were innumerable cases where for every dollar that went to the treasury four, five and sometimes ten dollars are taken out of the people's pockets and do not go into the treasury, but go to benefit this or that particular manufacturer. There have been cases well known where millions have been taken out of the pockets of the people and not a cent has gone into the public treasury. Mr. Foster—Millions? Sir Richard Cartwright—Millions; do you want the proofs? Mr. Foster—In Canada? Sir Richard—Yes; if the hon. gentleman will look at the duties on sugar preceding the recent addition, it will be seen that millions were taken out of the pockets of the people, and only the most

insignificant possible fraction of it found its way into the treasury. Let me observe here, in passing this fact, which I allude to as a very strong argument against the protective tariff, that although it applies to such a tariff, with a tariff force it applies also against any high tariff, any attempt to levy the bulk or greater part of our revenue by a high customs tariff. You cannot impose a duty on any article which partakes of the character of raw material, without enormously increasing the cost to the consumer in the end. This is a simple fact which the hon. gentleman can work out for himself. What is the hon. gentleman's declaration? It was that in 1895, under his tariff, the people of Canada were paying 39 cents less than they were in the period of 1874-5. What are the facts? The facts are these: To-day the people on an average are paying per family \$90, taking five individuals to a family, as against \$25 under the administration of Hon. Alexander Mackenzie. The present government have not saved 39 cents per head, but they have lost \$7 per head if a fair account were taken.

Sir, the hon. gentleman proceeding a little further, attempted to lessen the weight of his deficit of \$4,153,000 by observing that an amount of \$2,000,000 went into the sinking fund, which, as he truly said, reduced the debt, and he claimed credit for that. I do not object to give the hon. gentleman credit for it. But as we are raking up old history

of our militia, or the better defence of Canada, it will be done in no carping, ungenerous, censorious spirit. We will be willing to aid him in the utmost of our power in making proper provision in this regard. The finance minister, Sir Richard said, took credit for the home market. If he was to be credited with the home market he would also have to be debited with the 2,000,000 people who had left Canada for the United States. As to the increase of the urban population, it would have been far better for Canada that it was the rural population and not the urban population that increased. One of the gravest faults in the protective system was the flocking of the people to the cities from the country districts. As to the question of remission of taxation, the hon. gentleman claims that in his 17 years he remitted \$45,000,000 in taxes. Possibly he did, but he forgot to say that in those 17 years he had added \$50,000,000. That was the identical effect of the introduction of a protective system. The protective system from 1879 to the present time added to the very least \$30,000,000 a year to the taxation over and above the sum paid into the treasury. Multiply seventeen years by \$30,000,000 and you get \$510,000,000.

"Did the hon. minister," asked Sir Richard, "ever hear of the saint of old who stole a goose and gave the giblets to charity?" Sir Richard said that Mr. Foster had claimed that the National Policy had increased our farm products. There was no such thing. In the name of goodness what had the tariff done for that? It was in existence before the birth of the National Policy and it has grown in spite of the National Policy. There was also a claim that business failures had decreased. What were the facts? From 1874 to 1878 the Insolvency Act was in force, and a record kept of all bankruptcies. Since then there has been no general law and no accurate record kept. The amount of failures today was largely a matter of conjecture. The minister had dwelt with evident satisfaction upon the free tariff list. Well, out of its 378 articles not more than four or five, like anthracite coal and wool were of general use or a benefit to the people.

For instance, on the list were unadressed burr stones, pipeclay, diamonds and many precious stones. "Brimstone," added Dr. Landerkin. Sir Richard—My friend says brimstone is also ice granite and curling stones. Dr. Landerkin—"Skeletons and fossils." Sir Richard—Yes, skeletons and fossils. Sir Richard looked smilingly across at the minister and the house burst into laughter. No wonder, continued Sir Richard, that with such a policy and such a record the government had never dared to meet their opponents in a fair fight. They had taken refuge in a gerrymander, and in all the bribes they could scrape together.

Hon. Mr. Foster—We have been meeting you during the past 25 years. There was no gerrymander in the Maritime Provinces. Sir Richard—I am speaking of the country as a whole. In my own province they had gerrymandered some forty constituencies out of all shape and knowledge. If the government is burning to meet the people why do they not dissolve parliament? Hon. Mr. Foster—We are meeting the people to-day in Northumberland. Sir Richard—Very well, but why do they not meet them in the other vacant constituencies? Hon. Mr. Foster—Ask your leader. Sir Richard—I was not aware that the leader of the opposition was responsible for the policy of the government. Hon. Mr. Foster—You should be more united over there, and consult one another. Sir Richard then turned to that inexhaustible fountain of humor, the return of our industrial establishments as set forth in the census. The point arrived at was that in order to show industrial growth under the National Policy the government had been driven to make false and most ridiculous claims. Sir Richard gave several instances taken here and there from the census returns. There was the flourishing town of Caughnawaga, where 51 establishments employing 54 Indians of the male and female persuasion, engaged in the manufacture of ornamented snow shoes. In the county of Shelburne, N. S., the clever and industrious enumerators had discovered 93 knitting factories engineered and captained by 93 old women. But, take carpets; here was the pride and glory of the government. There were 597 new carpet manufacturing establishments in 1890. There were 51 existing in New Brunswick, employing just 51 persons, with an average capital of \$18 each. "Rag carpets," suggested a member; but Sir Richard would not commit himself to rag carpets. The census report said that he had made up his mind, if the council had not made up their minds on this subject, if they do not know what they are going to do, and will say that they have not quite decided. I shall not press this to the hon. gentleman, but if he and the council have made up their minds it is the most ostrich-like policy on the face of the earth to refuse, when making a budget statement, to say how many millions they require for that special vote. What is the hon. gentleman afraid of? Is he afraid of casting dismay into the great American nation, by informing the world that Canada wants three millions or thirty-three millions, for a matter of that, to put her defences in proper order? Mr. Foster—No danger of that after yesterday's debate. Sir Richard Cartwright—I am glad the hon. gentleman's mind is relieved. Then he will tell us, of course, what the amount is. Mr. Foster—I am sorry to say that I am not able to tell the hon. gentleman. Sir Richard—I am afraid that the impression we get on the hon. gentleman is going to be evanescent. If we will look at what is done usually in a similar case in England or elsewhere we will see that the request is very usual and that no reasonable, no rational proposition will be harshly criticized from this side. Still, as our duty requires that we should discuss and debate any proposition the hon. gentleman has to make looking to the better arma-

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owing to the government having frittered away the resources. It was a fault of the country, not of the foolish administration. If the Mackenzie policy had been carried out there would have been better results. As to his letter in the London Economist the statement made by Mr. Borden, the American ambassador, Mr. James, was equally as strong against protection as anything he said in that letter. Canadian public life had been debased and demoralized by the results of the free trade policy of the hon. gentleman and his friends had inaugurated. Sir C. H. Tupper—Will the hon. gentleman say what his object was in writing that letter? Sir Richard—I have not the slightest objection. I have stated it before. I have found that certain persons on the other side and certain persons here—among them men who hold positions in our civil service—had been for a very considerable time systematically maligning the Liberal party and leaders, and I was determined that that should not go on longer without intelligent and thoughtful Englishmen knowing that there was two sides to the question without knowing what the Liberal party was, what it amounted to, and why the Liberal party had advocated the policy it did, and therefore I addressed the letter to the London Economist. Sir Richard—The hon. gentleman in their time have sent the people of Canada on many a wild goose chase, they have sent them after many will-o-wisps. The hon. gentleman, sometimes, however, get hold of an idea which has something to recommend it, and with respect to this question of possible preferential trade between Great Britain and her colonies not on political and economic grounds—there is, or there might be, something to be said. But have these hon. gentlemen thought out, have they considered, have they reflected for one moment what preferential trade between Great Britain and her colonies meant, and are they prepared to pay the price? Suppose the government of Great Britain were to come down to us and say: "Admit British manufactured goods free into Canada and we