

So that no matter what tack we may take, how anxious we are to facilitate business, or how we endeavour to meet the wishes of hon. gentlemen opposite, they are so inconsistent they will not be satisfied, but must carp at and condemn every act of their opponents. However, as we have a duty to perform to our constituents, and as we are the better judges as to how that duty should be performed, the question of whether it please or displeases hon. gentlemen opposite is of minor importance. The Finance Minister and those who have followed him on that side of the House lay great stress on the prosperity which they claim Canada is enjoying at the present time, and attempt by implication on the part of some of them, and by actually claiming in so many words on the part of others less intelligent and less well informed, that this prosperity is due to the beneficent administration of the government of the day. That trade has improved, our exports and imports have advanced and our revenue increased as a consequence, are matters for congratulation, and to no class of our people is this fact more acceptable than to Her Majesty's loyal opposition. By no word, by no action, on the part of any member of the opposition either in this House or out of it, has an attempt been made to belittle whatever prosperity we are enjoying to-day as a country, or to gain party capital by decrying the fair fame and credit of our country. In this respect our action will compare more than favourably with those of hon. gentlemen opposite under similar circumstances, who, when on this side of the House, never missed an opportunity to injure the credit of Canada and advertise it as an unprofitable field for immigration by their speeches both in and out of parliament, and lauding the country to the south of us. Recognizing, however, that we owe a higher duty to our native land than can be offset by any party advantage, we cheerfully join with our opponents in welcoming this expansion of trade, though taking issue with them as to the cause of that expansion. A party whose doctrine has always in the past been that good times are not the production of legislative enactments, who when in office from 1873 to 1878, repudiated the idea that the government could create prosperity, is scarcely in a position to-day to lay claim, consistently at any rate, to being the authors of whatever prosperity we are enjoying at the present time. If they attribute it to their trade policy, it is but paying another compliment to the policy of their predecessors which has been adopted by them, and entirely owing to the fact that the ruthless hand of the destroyer has been stayed, and they have preferred meeting with the ridicule of political friend and foe alike, and hearing truthful accusations of gross breaches of faith hurled against them, promises unfulfilled and pledges broken, confidence betrayed and an outraged public deceived,

Mr. ROCHE.

rather than run the risk of reversing the policy they had been abusing for eighteen long years. No better evidence of the character of the tariff of the present day is required than that afforded by the address of the president of the Canadian Manufacturers Association at their annual meeting which was held in Toronto a short time ago. And, remember this is an organization that was always referred to by our political opponents as a political organization for the purpose of assisting the Tory party when it was in power, and in whose interests it was charged the protective tariff was being maintained. This is what the president said:

The association has been in existence twenty-five years. The object of its formation was to educate the country on the advantage of protection to native industries, and greatly through its efforts was the present tariff enacted; and, while it is still necessary to carefully watch that this great principle be not interfered with, it is now felt that it is not a political issue, both parties admitting that protection is now here to stay. This object being, therefore, an accomplished fact, the association should further extend its usefulness by giving its attention to other matters.

Do you suppose, Mr. Speaker, that the Canadian Manufacturers Association, hard-headed business men, some of the brightest minds in the business world of Canada, would have given this certificate of character to the tariff of this government if it were a free trade tariff—as these hon. gentlemen promise it would be, though they have since tried to repudiate their utterances on that score—or if it were a tariff for revenue only, as the right hon. Prime Minister and some of his more servile supporters pretend it is, or if it were anything else but a protective tariff. Still, in spite of this declaration on the part of those manufacturers of the Red Parlour, whom hon. gentlemen opposite have so frequently stigmatized as 'robbers great and robbers small' we have these hon. gentlemen proclaiming that they have fulfilled their pledges.

Let me read you an article that appeared in the official organ of the Manufacturers Association on the 15th September, 1897, after the present tariff had been adopted by the government:

As long as the main issue presented at our general elections was the maintenance of protection or a radical departure from it, just so long did the advocates of it receive the support of the manufacturers, and thus maintain their control of the government.

That is, the Conservative party received the support of the manufacturers.

Unfortunately for the party in power previous to the last election, they allowed other issues to become uppermost and of greater importance than that of protection; and, as might have been expected, having become neglectful of the vital interests of the manufacturers, they were retired to the cold shades of the vanquished. Having through their own unwise act forfeited the support of the manufacturers and the control of