

But, Sir, I know very well that, though the principle of free trade has triumphed in the United States—and perhaps this is the little stratagem which the hon. gentleman wants to employ upon this occasion, perhaps this is the refuge he wants to take for himself—I know very well, as well as the hon. gentleman knows, that, although the principle of free trade has been adopted in the United States, that freedom of trade will not be applied in the tariff this year, or next year, or the year after. I know that for a great many years to come, the American people will continue to levy their revenue by a Customs tariff, but I say this to the hon. gentleman: That henceforward, not only as long as the Democratic party are in power, (but I believe, also, that whenever the Republican party comes back to power), that no more shall revenue be levied for the purpose of protection, but that it shall be levied only for the purposes of a revenue, and for nothing else; because, as I have said to the hon. gentleman, the tariff of protection has been denounced by the American people as a fraud and a robbery. Sir, I have stated, and I repeat it here, that our tariff is simply an imitation of the American tariff, and, as the American tariff was denounced, so now I denounce the Canadian tariff as a fraud. I denounce it as a robbery of the great majority of the Canadian people for the benefit of the few. I denounce it in the name of the thousands whom it has impoverished. I denounce it in the name of the thousands whom it has sent into exile, and I denounce it in the name of a long-suffering nation. Talk, Sir, of reforming the tariff! Gentlemen on the other side of the House expect that my hon. friend the Finance Minister will reform the tariff. Why, Sir, the Finance Minister cannot do it, because he will never dare to extirpate from it the vicious principle which is the bane and evil of it. I know what he will do. He will tinker his tariff; he will patch it; he will polish the surface of it so as to give it the appearance of reform, but as to any measure of reform in the tariff, it will, and must be as hollow as the fruit of the Dead Sea. Mr. Speaker, I come now to an objection which I have not heard in this House, but which is commencing to be circulated in the Government press. I have seen it stated in the ministerial press, not only in one paper, but in several, that the Liberals cannot be sincere in their policy of tariff reform. It is stated that they cannot be sincere when they profess to be in favour of alleviating the burdens which press upon the majority of the people, because, forsooth, only a few months ago, they wanted to assimilate the Canadian tariff to the American tariff, under the guise of unrestricted reciprocity. I denounce this statement as an absolute falsehood, and I defy any man, either in this House or out of it, to quote an expression from any Liberal that he ever attempted or wanted to assimilate the Canadian tariff to the American tariff

Nay, more, Sir, I defy any gentleman, in this House or out of it, to prove that the American authorities ever wanted to assimilate the Canadian tariff to the American tariff, as the price of unrestricted reciprocity.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh.

Mr. LAURIER. Who says "no." Is there any man in this House who will challenge my statement? Ministers have asserted it, I know, but let them bring the evidence. Let them bring the correspondence which they have in their own possession. If Ministers here made that statement, Ministers on the other side have said the very reverse; and since the correspondence has not been brought down, I for my part refuse to believe the statement. Talk, Sir, of assimilating the Canadian tariff to the American tariff. It would be very shocking, of course, to hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, who have not hesitated to bring the whole body of the American tariff into our Statute-book—it would be very shocking to them if the Liberal party were now to assimilate the Canadian tariff to the American tariff in the few points in which there is still a discrepancy. They themselves can do it, and do it under the cloak of loyalty. Loyalty, Sir, is a cloak under which we know many things can be hidden, which, if viewed under the full light of day, would be odious and repellant; and this is, perhaps, the reason hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House are always so fond of parading in that garment. But I say, Sir, without the least hesitation, that uniformity of tariffs is not at all essential to reciprocity. Of course, I fully admit that if there were between the American tariff and the Canadian tariff a great divergence in regard to some articles, reciprocity in those articles would be almost impossible. There are two reasons for that. The first is that if there were a great difference between the two tariffs in regard to some article, a similar article would be imported from abroad into the country having the lower tariff, with the view of smuggling it into the country with the higher tariff. There is another reason which I will state, and which will commend itself to hon. gentlemen opposite. If there were a great discrepancy between the tariffs in one article, the manufacturer in the country with the lower tariff would have a great advantage over the manufacturer in the country with the higher tariff. But let me say that we have always been in favour of reciprocity. No one would suppose, because we were in favour of unrestricted reciprocity, that if we could not obtain that we should not take anything else. Again and again we have said that if we could not obtain reciprocity along the whole line, unrestricted, unlimited, we should be willing to take reciprocity in natural products, or in natural products with manufactured articles included. But when