

The situation at that time was critical. An excitement, amounting to a furore, had been worked up by the enemies of protection, and some who had previously declared themselves staunch adherents of the National Policy, weakened. It was evident, however, that some changes in the tariff were imperative, and that, if they were not inaugurated by the friends of protection, the Government could not survive—

A plain indication that the Conservative Government is an organized hypocrisy, as it was once described in England by the late Mr. Disraeli, because they never intended to reduce the tariff, they only intended to deceive the country.

—that the enemies of protection would accede to power.

It was under these circumstances that the tariff committee entered upon their labours, having the counsel and assistance of many of the most experienced members of the association,—

It was not a meeting of Ministers in Council that rigged up the tariff of 1894.

—the result of which was the embodiment of their views in a communication to the Finance Minister (a copy of which is here before you), which elicited from him a kindly letter, in which he alluded to it as a well-prepared brief in which all the matters therein discussed had been done full justice. Perhaps it might be going too far to even surmise the effect these recommendations of your tariff committee to the Minister may have had in the final arrangement of the tariff; but it is but an act of justice to the committee to direct attention to the large number of changes that were made in the tariff along the lines suggested in the recommendations, and that in many instances the language used in both are substantially identical. This is particularly noticeable as regards the iron schedule, the duties upon textiles, the duties upon drugs, chemicals, alcoholic preparations, &c., as well as upon an extended list of miscellaneous articles, and large and most important additions to the list of non-dutiable articles. It is also to be noticed that, in many instances where the recommendations suggested that no changes be made in the duties upon articles therein enumerated, no changes were made.

What credit do the Government and Finance Minister deserve for bringing down a tariff like this to the House when the manufacturers of this country that entered into an association to influence the Government in framing their tariff? Let me say that I am happy to be able to state that many honest and intelligent manufacturers would not enter that association or have anything to do with it, but those who did enter it used such language as I have been reading to you with respect to the revision of the tariff, and those who did not agree with them were to be hung up by the neck, and that was to be the end of them. A statement of that kind was made at a meeting of the Manufacturers' Association:

One of the objects of this association is to influence public opinion to appreciate the necessity of the imposition of adequate duties upon imported products by which to protect Canadian labour.

Mr. McMILLAN.

Now, I think there is another statement somewhere with respect to this association by an ex-president. He says:

A popular superstition is, that the association is the vehicle by which an immense fund is collected to corrupt the electorate, than which nothing could be further from the truth. We have in the past, and it is to be hoped will in the future, devote any small surplus of our membership fees to spreading the truth by means of campaign literature and campaign speeches, following the manner, but not the matter, of the English Cobden Club.

What did the English Cobden Club do when they were agitating against the corn laws. They sent subscription lists throughout England and got £250,000 subscribed, so that if they were following the manner of the Cobden Club, the first thing they did was to bring influence to bear upon the Government as well through their literature as by the advice they gave the Finance Minister. Thank God, Mr. Speaker, we are out of the hands of the combiners in Canada today. No wonder that their friends fight a hard battle for them when they see that in all likelihood a law will be put upon the Statute-book of Canada that will put an end to these combines. They said that law of a different description should be passed. Well, they had been in office since 1878, and after that Combine Committee sat, a Bill was brought into this House which was afterwards killed in the Senate. They have had ample time to bring in another law, but have they ever attempted to do so? No, and this explains why the funds of that association was brought to bear upon them so that they would legislate in their interest and not in the interest of the country.

Now, there is one question that I want to take up specially, and that is the question of corn. We have been told by the hon. member for North Grey (Mr. Sproule) and by the hon. gentleman who spoke last, what the effect would be of allowing free corn to come into this country. The hon. member for East Grey stated that in 1877 so large an amount of corn came into this country that the Government had to take hold and pass the National Policy in order to protect the farmers. Now, let me say that after the National Policy had been in existence in Canada for four years, there was a commission appointed that went to Chicago, that went to Toronto, that went to Montreal, and collected all the evidence they possibly could with respect to the influence that the National Policy had had upon the agricultural interests of Canada. Let me say that I was astonished when I first came to Ottawa and called for the Sessional Papers for the session in which that report was made, and the Sessional Papers of the next year, but I found that the statements with respect to coarse grains were eliminated, or had never been entered on the Sessional Papers, because they were not