

tion of our fiscal policy was settled by the Canadian people long before the hon. gentleman favoured us with his presence. I have asked the hon. gentleman whether he ever voted against the administration since he came here, although it is a protectionist government in the main, and you heard his answer. In all these years did he ever take advantage of his right to move or make an attempt to move to reduce any single item of the tariff? That after all is a test of a man's free trade principles in Canada; I do not know what the test is in England whence he comes. And, I dare say that the hon. gentleman will continue to support the present administration. Of course he will, everybody knows that. And, I venture to say that the hon. gentleman is not only a lonely free trader but, as he has told us himself, he is the greatest theorist in the House.

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer). I am sure my hon. friend does not wish to misrepresent me.

Mr. BLAIN. I do not.

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer). I said I had been called a theorist. There is surely a great difference between a man being called a theorist by others and calling himself a theorist.

Mr. BLAIN. Well, the appellation fitted him so well that he made the House believe he was the greatest theorist here. When a man comes into parliament to preach a new doctrine as it may be called; when he comes here to preach free trade; when the people of Canada give him a responsible position in parliament for several years, and he makes no attempt to reduce the tariff but gives a continued and enthusiastic support to a government which talked free trade out of power, and which adopted protection in power, what are we to think? But there are in Canada those whose opinions I would take in preference to that of my hon. friend as to what is best for Canada. I will not encumber 'Hansard' with too many extracts but I must read a resolution passed by the Montreal Board of Trade which is one of the largest commercial institutions in Canada.

Resolved, that we, the members of the Montreal Board of Trade, in annual meeting assembled, believe that the sober sense of the country as a whole is against any change in the trade policy under which Canada has grown to her present admitted state of prosperity;

That we consider it to be the bounden duty of every Canadian to resist to the last anything that might endanger our status as a component part of the British Empire, and that we fear such a treaty as proposed might easily prove to be the entering of a wedge that would eventually result in a separation of our interests from those of the mother land;

That we hereby record the unalterable opposition of this board to the proposed reciprocity treaty with the United States, which treaty would involve the country in dangers not yet fully realized, and we consider that the government should first ascertain the opinion of the whole country on this question, and receive a definite mandate thereon, before committing it to a change so revolutionary as this reversal of its entire policy, threatening not only the trade, but also the more vital interests of Canada as a nation;

That the Council of the Board, with the following other members, are hereby appointed a special committee, with power to add to its number, for the purpose of proceeding to Ottawa and presenting to the government the views of this board, as expressed in this resolution: Messrs. C. C. Ballantyne, Geo. Caverhill, E. B. Greenshields, A. J. Hodgson, Robert Meighen, Farquar Robertson.

These are gentlemen who have been in this country longer than since 1896. These gentlemen do not all belong to the Conservative party. Some of them are supporters of my right hon. friend and supporters of the policy which my hon. friend from Red Deer votes for, but not the policy he talks about in this House. These gentlemen ought to know something about what policy would be best suited to the people of Canada. These gentlemen have grown up with Canada's prosperity. They have witnessed one government in power and now another. They can trace the history of Canada for many years. They can go back to 1873 and find a Liberal government in power headed by a distinguished man, the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie. From 1873 to 1878 this trade question took shape in Canada. During those years, in this very chamber, the government of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, and the opposition headed by that distinguished statesman, Sir John Macdonald, discussed this trade question, not from a British standpoint particularly, though that was kept in view, but from a Canadian standpoint, and that is what the people of this country want on the present question. During those years the Liberal-Conservative party placed their policy as a party before the people of Canada by a resolution and a vote in this House. The right hon. leader of the government followed his leader at that time in a policy of low tariff for Canada. During the years that the Mackenzie administration was in power—I am not going to charge it to anybody—there were dull times in Canada, in the mercantile interests, in the agricultural interests, in the manufacturing interests. They all came to this parliament seeking for some redress from the condition of things that prevailed, and the Liberal-Conservative party laid down its policy as a protective tariff for this country. The government in power opposed that, and in