

Association that all minds must be cast in the same mould, that all wheels must revolve in the same groove, they must act like a flock of sheep, and wherever one jumps the others must follow. We have not the same standard of excellence, that is not the way we do in the ranks of the Liberal party, associated as we are—

Mr. COCHRANE. You can fight like blazes, and it will be all right.

The PRIME MINISTER. Oh yes, we can fight like blazes, and then we peaceably settle our little differences. But we do not fight, as the hon. gentlemen opposite used to fight when they were in the council chamber they used to fight with their naked fists, and the walls of the council chamber could testify of some Homeric battle which took place therein when the hon. gentlemen could not settle their differences of opinion in any other way. My hon. friend, in the campaign which he made a few days ago, professed to be in ignorance of the policy of the Liberal party. I must say that his ignorance is surprising, occupying the position that he does, having been for seven years now, if I mistake not, a member of this parliament. His ignorance surprises me, for the policy of the Liberal party has been on the statute-book for six years. When it was introduced into this House it was discussed and debated, and was assailed by my hon. friend and his followers. My hon. friend has been assailing the Liberal policy for all these years, and must we come to the conclusion that he did not know what he was talking about? It is certainly in the public interest that an hon. gentleman occupying the position that he does should be informed of what was the policy of the Liberal party. Surely my hon. friend knows that on this side of the House there are men who believe that free trade is the soundest and sanest of all economical systems, and there are also men who believe that protection is a preferable principle. If I am told that it is a strange thing that there should be free traders and protectionists in the same party, I would reply that it is the policy of statesmanship to reconcile differences, and out of a diversity of opinions to elaborate a policy which may be satisfactory to the country, remembering that there are no absolute rights in this country, but that all rights are subordinate to the common welfare. But I may also say to my hon. friend, and in saying this I may perhaps claim to be more candid than himself or his friends, that whether we are free traders or protectionists, we are all agreed that in this country and under existing circumstances, it is as inadvisable as it is impossible to have either an absolute system of free trade or an absolute system of protection. Our system was embodied in the year 1897 in a tariff which will live in history as the Fielding tariff. It is well suited to the country, as is evidenced by

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

past experience, and by the unbounded prosperity which the country has enjoyed under it. My hon. friend says that he has a recruit for his views in the person of my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Préfontaine). He says the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is a protectionist, but if he had quoted the whole speech of my hon. friend he would have quoted that part of his speech wherein he says that in the present tariff there is enough of protection to satisfy him, and to satisfy anybody who looks only to the interest of the country and not to the interest of his party.

But my hon. friend says that we are divided on this question. What would my hon. friend say if I were to show him a man, not a party but a man, who is divided against himself on this question? Will he say it is impossible for a single man to be divided on that question? We can conceive it possible that a party might be divided against itself but surely it is a stranger thing to find a man divided against himself. Well, I have read the speeches of my hon. friend, I had that pleasure for some weeks after I came back from Europe, and I found that my hon. friend is divided against himself on that very question. He has not the same opinion in all parts of the country. I must, however, pay him this compliment, that in order to suit the views of an audience in one part of the country and then suit the views of another audience in another part of the country, he has performed some feats of acrobatic agility of which I did not suspect him capable. Let me quote the words of my hon. friend on this question. Last year my hon. friend gave us his views of what he thought ought to be the fiscal policy of Canada. He is a new leader, and of course he is trying to please all his friends, and he succeeds very well in doing so, I give him credit for that. He wished to lay down a policy upon which he could go before the country and the people, and so he moved this resolution:

This House regarding the operation of the present tariff as unsatisfactory is of opinion that this country requires a declared policy of such adequate protection to its labour, agricultural products, manufactures and industries, as will at all times secure the Canadian market for Canadians.

"Adequate protection." In the olden times it used to be called the National Policy. But it is the same old friend with a new name. "Adequate protection." Well, whether you call it adequate protection or the National Policy, it is still a debatable question as to what adequate protection means. I may say to my right hon. friend that he did not leave us in doubt as to what he meant by adequate protection, for in the course of his speech in support of this resolution, he said this:

We find that our rate of duty on total imports from the United States is about 12½ per cent, and on dutiable goods from the United