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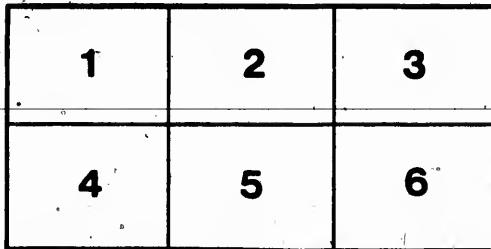
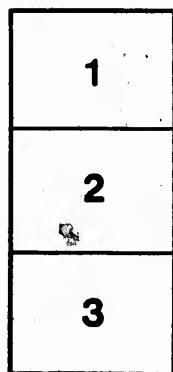
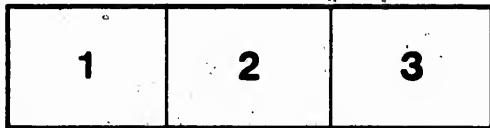
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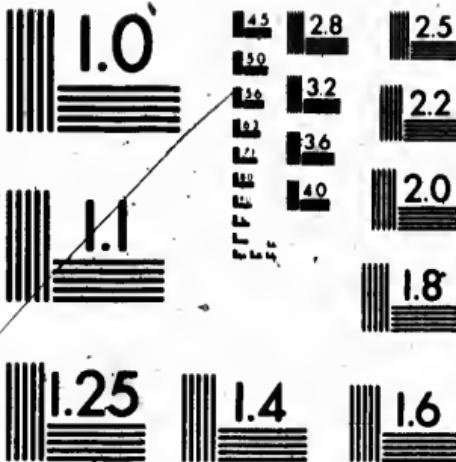
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# House of Commons Debates.

FIFTH SESSION—EIGHTH PARLIAMENT.

SPEECH

OF

T. S. SPROULE, M.P.

ON

## PREFERENTIAL TRADE WITH GREAT BRITAIN

OTTAWA, FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 1900

Mr. T. S. SPROULE (East Grey). The hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat (Mr. Campbell), has treated the House to a number of assertions utterly unsupported by either facts or figures. When he did venture to quote figures, he did so at random, and they will be searched for in vain in any parliamentary return. I do not propose to deal with his statements at any great length, but wish briefly to refer to one of the last assertions he made. What was it? He said that the large increase in our exports of butter, cheese and bacon, is due to the action of the government in putting corn on the free list. Well, if that be

the case, you would naturally expect to find that in those localities where the production of bacon has increased the most, the consumption of corn has been the greatest. But in reality that is not the case. Take my own section of country, there has been in that section a rapid development in these three lines, but I do not know of any farmer who uses a pound of corn to feed to his hogs except perhaps just in the middle of summer when other feed is scarce. The same remark will apply to the increased production of cheese and butter. That is due altogether to causes over which the

policy of this government has practically no control. It is due to the splendid provision which was made before the present government came into office for giving instructions to the farmers, and the provisions for cold storage, and the educational work carried on during many years by commissioners whom we sent to England to study the requirements of the markets there, and who came back and instructed our farmers what they should provide for that market. The results of work such as this could not be seen in one or two years, but must extend over a number of years. The late government were for several years carrying on that work of education. Of that there can be no question, because it is a matter of record, and the farmers of this country know it quite as well as any hon. member in this House. The fruits of that work could not be seen in the first year or the second or third, but any one who will take the trouble to look up the trade and navigation returns will see that year after year our trade was increasing. This was due to the educational work being carried on and to the provisions made for the better transportation of the products of the farm to the markets of the old world, and about the time the late government left office they had in a measure perfected those various lines, and the people were beginning to reap the advantage of their work. The increase in that trade is therefore not due to any change in the tariff or to anything the present government has done, but to the very valuable work done by their predecessors.

We are sometimes told that it was this government which established the system of cold storage. Why, Sir, the whole cold storage system was outlined and started and in process of development before the present government came into power. All that they have done since has been to endeavour to perfect this system, and in my judgment they have proceeded at a very slow rate. We were told in triumphant tones last year that what they had done had resulted very much to the benefit of the farmers in taking their fruit to the other side. But we find there was a falling off this year, that the cold storage was not exactly what was required for the benefit of the fruit-growers. There is a great deal to be learned and a great deal to be done before we reach the stage of perfection that will give the farmer the benefit he ought to have from cold storage. When the hon. member for Kent (Mr. Campbell) said that the development of these three lines is due to anything the present government has done, he is misleading the people, wittingly or unwittingly, and he is doing a great injustice to his predecessors and unfairly representing the situation to the people.

We had yesterday afternoon what was to my mind one of the strangest spectacles I have witnessed in this House for many years—a prominent supporter of the government rising in his place, when the motion

was made by the Minister of Finance, that the House resolve itself in Committee of Supply, and moving an amendment. A motion of amendment to supply is usually regarded as a motion of want of confidence in the government. Do the government so regard it in this case? I am inclined to think they will accept it, under the circumstances. The government, I have no hesitation in saying, by prearranged action, put up one of their own supporters to move that the House do not resolve itself in Committee of Supply, but that a motion in amendment be adopted. And what was the character of it? It was a gushing eulogium upon the government for giving preferential trade to the mother country. They had affirmed that principle two or three times in this House, and their followers had spoken in favour of it at great length. We thought that no more time of the House would be wasted in moving motions in favour of it. But, they are not tired of talking about it yet, and one of their supporters is put up to eulogize the government for what they have done. And for what reason? According to the motion, because they did give a preferential tariff to the mother country, and because it is of some special advantage to Canada and of some special advantage to Great Britain. In what respect, we naturally ask ourselves, has it been of advantage to Canada? The statement of hon. gentlemen opposite is that it has reduced the duties on goods coming into Canada. But, as has been stated by previous speakers, before they reduced the tariff by the preferential clause, they increased the tariff on these same articles. Reducing it by preference, they left it practically where it was before. Consequently, it has not done much good to Canada. On the other hand, in my judgment, it has done substantial injustice and harm to Canada. It has prevented Canada from getting what otherwise, I believe, she could have got a substantial advantage for her goods in the British market as compared with other countries that had not given Great Britain preferential treatment. Had we succeeded in getting England to give us a preference in her market in return for the advantage we would give her, see what an advantage it would be to the farmer, the artisan and the labourer of this Dominion. It would have been of substantial advantage to Canada, but, instead, we have the very reverse. What this House should do, and what this country, I believe, will do, when it has an opportunity, is to pass a vote of censure upon the government for giving so much to England and getting nothing in return.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE (Mr. Fielding). I hope my hon. friend (Mr. Sproule) will move it here first.

Mr. SPROULE. Perhaps the hon. minister will have an opportunity of expressing his opinion upon it and giving his vote upon

It, if they do not break down and go to the country too soon, as the indications are now that they will.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I venture to predict that my hon. friend will not move it.

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Fielding) has not proved up to the present that he is a prophet or the son of a prophet; and I am afraid that if his reputation in that regard depended upon his present prediction, he might find himself in an awkward predicament in the future. I say, had we succeeded in arranging trade relations with the mother country upon the lines suggested by the hon. member for North Bruce (Mr. McNeill) we would have done a good thing for the Canadian people and no injustice to England. Then we should have been bringing England and, at any rate, one of her colonies close together in trade relations to their mutual advantage.

Now, how far is this so-called preference an advantage to England? I remember that for several years, the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), and the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright), endeavoured to convince this House and the people of the country that the policy known as the national policy discriminated against the mother country; and the argument they offered to prove it was that each year we were importing less from the mother country than before it was brought into force and importing more from the United States. Therefore, said these hon. gentlemen, we were discriminating against the mother country. By the same parity of reasoning, applied to the tariff of 1896, what do we find? From the time this tariff was introduced our trade with the United States has been growing greater and our trade with the mother country is going down—what we import from Great Britain is growing less and what we import from the United States is growing more.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. The hon. gentleman does not mean that, surely?

Mr. SPROULE. I do, distinctly.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. That our imports from the mother country are going down?

Mr. SPROULE. I say, compared with our trade with the United States. There can be no doubt of it. Our trade with the United States is going up largely every year, while with the mother country there is a reduction rather than an increase.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. No, no.

Mr. SPROULE. Except our exports to the mother country, where we find our

natural market. If these hon. gentlemen succeeded in proving that the trade relations between Canada and the mother country under the national policy were injurious to England, then, this tariff is injurious to England, in even a greater degree. If the other tariff discriminates against England, this also discriminates against England to a larger extent than the other. This is a tariff that has neither been advantageous to Canada nor to the other country. I say it is distinctly disadvantageous to both. I quite believe that it has brought the colonies closer to the mother country. There is a national sentiment, which is being created by it, that is distinctly in advance of anything we have had heretofore. I agree with the hon. gentleman that to some extent that is the case. I believe it has tended to awaken towards us feelings of sympathy in England, and that the people of England have become better acquainted with the people of Canada, than they have been heretofore. They have a substantial reason for that. We gave the people of England a valuable consideration for which we got nothing in return. We could do that with any nation in the world if we generously give away what belonged to the people of Canada. The hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Russell), said: I may be allowed to elaborate a little on this question. We are sometimes told that the present government have not fulfilled the promises they made to the people before they came into power. He said, that, subsequently, they had carried out every plank in the platform that they had laid down to the people of the country, before they were elected to power, he said: I know of no government that has ever lived in Canada, that has been so successful or so correct in carrying out the principles which they propounded to the electors of the country, as the present government. I asked myself: What were these promises? Let me ask the people of this country, and the hon. members of this House, whether that statement is absolutely correct or not. I know that in dealing with this question, I am only dealing with subjects that have been dealt with by hon. gentlemen on this side of the House more at length than I intend to do, and who have supported their arguments with a greater array of facts and figures than I propose to bring forth tonight, because, I think it would be waste of the time of the House to go, at length, into points that others have taken up and which have been gone over several times before. What were the promises made to the people of this country? The first was the reduction of taxation. The hon. member for Halton (Mr. Henderson), has given facts and figures to show that hon. gentlemen opposite did not reduce taxation, but rather increased it. Will the hon. member for Halifax say that plank in the platform was carried out? Will the people of Canada say it was carried

out? I am quite sure that they will not, and I say that no hon. gentleman, having any regard for integrity, or intelligence, or honesty, or truthfulness, can fairly stand up and say that that plank of the platform was honestly carried out. Yet, we are told that every plank in the platform was carried out. The second plank was, that they were to reduce the expenditure. The hon. member for Kent, Ont., (Mr. Campbell), said that it is true that they have increased the expenditure from \$38,000,000 to \$41,000,000, but he asks: Has the expenditure been unwise; will any hon. gentleman show in what particular the government have expended that money foolishly? The hon. member was frank enough to admit that there was an increase in the expenditure, but, we have the word of the hon. member for Halifax for it, that every plank in the platform was carried out. Why did they not decrease the expenditure instead of increasing it? Then, I say, that that plank of the platform was not carried out, that there was a violation of the promise made to the people, because, instead of reducing the expenditure, it was increased at least \$3,000,000 over what it was during the last year that their predecessors were in power. The next plank in their platform was, that there was to be no increase in the public debt. The hon. member for Kent, Ont., admitted that they had increased the public debt, but he said that they had not increased it as rapidly as their predecessors. Then, I say, that that plank was not carried out. The statement of the hon. member for Halifax is, that every plank was carried out, that every promise was fulfilled, but I have shown that not one of these three promises was fulfilled. What must the people think when an hon. gentleman stands up, belonging to the other side of the House, and says that the promises made to the people before the elections have been substantially fulfilled. Then, hon. gentlemen were to reduce the cost of agricultural implements to the farmers. Have they done that? How did they reduce the cost? They led the farmers to believe that they would reduce the cost of agricultural implements, by reducing the tariff on agricultural implements. The tariff on agricultural implements is 20 per cent to-day, the same as it was when they came into power. Agricultural implements are not any cheaper than when they came into power, but, in some respects, they are a little dearer. Hon. gentlemen say, it is true, but we reduced the duty on raw material so as to enable the manufacturers to turn out their implements at a lower cost. If they have made a reduction in the cost, they have put it in their own pockets, by way of profit, because, the farmers are getting their implements no cheaper. But, it was said, that the farmers were to get cheaper binder twine when hon. gentlemen came into power. They have been in power

for three years, and what is binder twine sold at to day? Last year binder twine was sold in our country at from 11 cents to 13 cents per pound. I know that I paid 12½ cents a pound for binder twine, and did not get the best quality at that. In 1898, it was from 14 cents to 16 cents per pound. Have hon. gentlemen kept their premise that they would reduce binder twine? In 1897, it was from 8 to 9 cents a pound, while, in 1898, before hon. gentlemen came into power, and before the duty was taken off, it was from 6 cents to 7½ cents a pound. From that time to last year, the price has gone up, although last year, there was a little reduction. The hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) says that it is true that binder twine has gone up a little, but it was due to the Spanish-American war, which increased the cost of the raw material, so that the price had to be put up. The hon. gentleman, for many years, was an ardent student of the Auditor General's report. I wondered, when he was speaking, if he had looked over that volume for the last three years, because, if he had, and if he had taken the trouble to look at what the cost of the raw material was, he would have seen that the raw material, used in the manufacture of binder twine, that was sold in Canada in 1897, cost, laid down at the penitentiary, 3½ cents a pound. The hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Mills), in a pamphlet, which I have before me, states that it cost three-quarters of a cent per pound to make the binder twine. If the raw material was laid down at 3½ cents a pound and it took three-quarters of a cent a pound to manufacture it, how was it that the farmers of Canada paid so much for their binder twine in that year? They paid in 1897, from 8 cents to 9 cents a pound.

Mr. WILSON. How much did it cost to make it?

Mr. SPROULE. Three-quarters of a cent a pound. The raw material cost 3½ cents a pound, and it cost  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a cent a pound to make it. Four and a quarter cents a pound was the cost of this binder twine which was sold to the farmers for 7 cents, 8 cents and 9 cents a pound. Where did the difference go if it did not go to the middlemen, who by virtue of the manner in which the government sold that binder twine, were enabled to control the sale to the farmers, and thereby reap the large profits represented by the margin between 4½ cents and 9 cents a pound, which the farmers were forced to pay for it. Was that exorbitant price due to the increased cost of raw material, as the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. McMullen) says? Not at all. Was it due to the fact that they had to pay a higher price for raw material because of the difficulty of getting manilla and sisal on account of the Spanish-American war? Not at all. Why, Mr. Speaker, let me tell the hon. gentleman that the raw material for the binder twine was laid down at Kingston pen-

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tentary for the year 1898 for 3½ cents a pound, the same exactly as the year before. The cost of manufacture was the same, but the farmers in the year 1898 were compelled to pay from 14 to 16 cents a pound, although that twine only cost 4½ cents. Who got the difference? It certainly was not the farmer, but it was the middle man who was able to operate in that way on account of the manner in which the government sold the binder twine to the monopolists. One of the planks in the Liberal platform was that they would destroy monopolies, but from the day they came into power until the present hour, they have played into the hands of the monopolists who, in turn, bled the farmers and the honest people of Canada. Last year the raw material laid down at Kingston cost 4 cents a pound, as compared with 3½ the year before. Allow 4 of a cent a pound for manufacture, and that twine cost at Kingston 4½ cents a pound, but in my part of the country the farmers had to pay from 11 to 13 cents a pound for it.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES (Sir Louis Davies). It must be the abolition of the duty that brought about the increased price.

Mr. SPROULE. I did not say it was the abolition of the duty that was altogether the cause, but, I say, as I have always said, that it does not follow as a matter of fact that the price of binder twine will be reduced if you take the duty off. If that twine is under a combine in the United States, and if you allow your unscrupulous speculators in Canada to join with that combine, as the government has done by reason of the manner in which they sold the output of the Kingston penitentiary, then these monopolists will run up the price on the poor farmers. Why did not this government do as the Liberal-Conservatives did? Why did they not hold a portion of that twine to sell to any farmer in the country a carload at any season in the year at the same price as it was sold to the man who purchased the whole output. If the government did this, and then, even if every twine factory in the country combined to put up the price, the farmer could, through his agent, order it from the Kingston penitentiary and obtain it at an honest profit over the cost of the raw material and the cost of manufacture. If the government did that last year, does any sane man think that the farmers would have to pay 11 to 13 cents a pound for it, and if the government did that the year before would the farmers have had to pay from 14 to 16 cents a pound for binder twine, which only costs 4½ cents? No. If the government had done as they should have done, the farmers could buy it at 4½ cents a pound at Kingston, the same as Hobbs, of London, and Bates, of Ottawa, bought it. A farmer ordering a carload could have distributed it amongst his neighbours, and

then the people of the country would have received a substantial benefit therefrom. Last year the government sold the output of the Kingston penitentiary, and the Ontario government sold the output of the Central prison in such a way that they played deliberately into the hands of the combine, and enabled that combine to extort over \$200,000 from the farmers of Canada, and I am within the mark when I place it at that figure. There is the Farmers Binder Twine Company, of Brantford, that was established by the Patrons of Industry ostensibly for the purpose of keeping the cost of binder twine down to a normal price. Up to the time the present government came into power the Brantford factory paid a small dividend upon the money invested, and which I believe was a reasonable profit. But what has occurred since the Liberals attained power? The monopolists to whom the government sold their twine arranged peaceably with the Brantford factory, and so the Brantford factory the year before last paid a dividend of 60 per cent on its stock, and last year they paid 100 cents on every dollar of stock that a shareholder invested in that factory. Where did that enormous profit come from? Why, it was taken out of the poor farmers of Canada by virtue of the manner in which this government sold the binder twine output of the Kingston penitentiary, and in which their friends in the Ontario government sold the binder twine output of the Central prison.

Mr. McNEILL. Shame.

Mr. SPROULE. This government put it within the power of Hobbs Bros., of London, and H. N. Bates, of Ottawa, and a few others of their friends to make arrangements, so that they controlled the output of binder twine in Kingston, Toronto, Cobourg and Brantford, which means the entire output of the Canadian factories except what was manufactured by the Cordage Company, of Montreal, and I am quite sure that that company joined with them, because they endeavoured to effect a combine years ago in order to make a larger profit on their investment.

Mr. TAYLOR. They are all in the ring.

Mr. SPROULE. That is a sample of the administration of this Liberal government, and in the face of that the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) has the hardihood to state in this House, that no government ever fulfilled so many of its promises as did this government during the last four years. The junior member for Halifax (Mr. Russell) also told us that every promise made by the Liberals out of power had been substantially and literally fulfilled since the Liberals came into power. Let me ask him (Mr. Russell) a few questions. Did they do away with monopolies? Not

at all. The fact is that ever since they came into power they have played into the hands of monopolies to the extent of bleeding the farmers of Canada almost white, and in the matter of binder twine alone they bled the farmers to the extent of several hundreds of thousands of dollars inside of a few years. What becomes of the argument of the hon. member for North Wellington when he says that binder twine was cheaper last year, although it was the only year that the raw material had increased in price? I was amused the other day to hear the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher) state, in reply to the hon. member for South Leeds (Mr. Taylor), that in the interest of the farmers the government are offering their binder twine now at a very slight profit over cost price. He told us that they sold to the farmers of Canada in lots of less than one ton, at the following prices: 14 cents for manilla, 11 cents for mixed manilla, and 10 cents for New Zealand; and up to when did they offer the binder twine at these prices? Up to the 20th of March of this year. They offered it to the farmers in winter, when they do not want binder twine, at 14 cents a pound. I was at home a week ago to-morrow, and I went into two hardware stores, and asked them at what price they would sell me binder twine? They said the same as last year—at 11 cents, 12½ cents and 13 cents a pound in five-pound lots, whereas the government offered to sell it in wholesale lots to the farmers of the country at 14 cents a pound in winter, when they do not want it. This is a wonderful thing that they have done for the benefit of the farmers; they will sell them at 14 cents a pound what costs the government exactly 8 cents a pound, so that they are going to make 8 cents a pound out of the farmers.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. Does the hon. gentleman deliberately commit himself to these figures?

Mr. SPRÖULE. They are the figures the government give, and I take their own figures. If they are wrong, the government are responsible for it, not I; it is their funeral, not mine. What was the cost of the raw material? The Auditor General says 5½ cents a pound laid down at Kingston, and I have the statement of Hon. Mr. Mills in this pamphlet that it costs 4 cent a pound to make the binder twine; therefore it cost only 6 cents a pound if the Auditor General and Mr. Mills are telling the truth. And the government are magnanimously and generously offering it to the farmers at 14 cents a pound.

Mr. ROGERS. I ask the privilege of asking the hon. gentleman a question. I say that the statement he has made is thoroughly misleading; the figures contradict him.

Mr. SPRÖULE. What is the hon. gentleman's question?

Mr. ROGERS. I ask what authority you have for the price of the raw material this year?

Mr. SPRÖULE. I have the authority of the Auditor General's Report. Does the hon. gentleman dispute that? It is made up by his own friends. Therefore, if it is wrong, I am not responsible for it; but I believe it is not wrong. I have reason to believe that it is right.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. The Auditor General's Report does not speak of the cost this year.

Mr. SPRÖULE. It speaks of the cost last year, and that is what goes into the binder twine used this year; and the government are magnanimously offering to sell to the farmers of Canada binder twine in less than ton lots at 14 cents a pound, which only costs them 8 cents, and that in the winter time, when they do not want it; but after the 20th of March, they will not sell them a pound at any price. I want the farmers of the country to know this. I want to ask how it squares with the statement of the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Russell), that this government have substantially carried out every promise they made to the people before they came into power. What about coal oil? Is it cheaper to-day? It is dearer. That is because the government have played into the hands of the combine, the gigantic oil trust, just as they played into the hands of the binder twine combine.

We were also told that if they came into power they would secure a reciprocity treaty with the United States, so that our people would have a market of 60,000,000 people to the south of us. The Prime Minister said distinctly in this House and in the country: 'As soon as we are returned to power, our first duty will be to negotiate a reciprocity treaty that will give you the advantage of that market of 60,000,000 people, and we have good grounds to believe that we can do it, because we are friendly to the United States, we have not exasperated them as our predecessors did.' The people of the country took them at their word, and elected them to power. Where is the reciprocity treaty they promised? We have had excursion after excursion to Washington, one member of the government with a palace car, another with a palace car, a third with a palace car. Every one who went to Washington had to go in a palace car. We have the accounts of their expenses given in the public accounts; and these excursions cost the country a large sum of money. These gentlemen had a good time, feasting, drinking and enjoying themselves; but they came back with-

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out a reciprocity treaty. I ask the junior member for Halifax if that promise was carried out; I ask the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen), was that promise carried out; I ask the hon. member for Kent (Mr. Campbell); and I ask the hon. member for East Huron (Mr. Macdonald), who is likely to speak after me, if he will kindly direct his attention to that matter for a short time and tell me if that promise was carried out. Have we a reciprocity treaty? No more than we had before these hon. gentlemen came to power.

But they were to get other markets for the people. Have they got any? Not one — east, west, north or south. The people have no other markets than they had before these hon. gentlemen came to power. They have not carried out their promise in that respect.

Now, I want to appeal to one or two hon. gentlemen, because this question applies to them more than to others. The hon. member for North Wellington who is always a very loud denouncer of the late government, said: 'When our party comes to power, one of the first things we will do will be to do away with the superannuation law. It is a great injustice to the people of the country for the government to be superannuating men who are practically in the prime of life and as well able to do their work on the day they were superannuated as at any time in their life. We are paying year after year thousands of dollars of superannuation allowances to men who are walking around the streets of Toronto and Ottawa idle. As soon as our party comes to power we will do away with superannuation.' I ask if they have done it. In three years they superannuated 155 civil servants. I have not had time to collate how much it costs this country a year to pay the superannuation allowances for these men, many of whom are likely to draw them for twenty years hence. I ask the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen), I ask the junior member for Halifax (Mr. Russell), and the hon. member for Kent, Ont. (Mr. Campbell), did they carry out their promise to do away with the superannuation law? They did not. That law stands on our statutes practically the same to-day, and these gentlemen are superannuating many clerks every year. They are adding to the burden of taxation in that respect to a larger extent every year than their predecessors did, yet they have the audacity to tell the people that they have carried out their pledges.

Then, we were to have no more appointments to office of members of parliament until at least two years after they had ceased to be members. The hon. Postmaster General introduced a Bill to that effect, and supported it by as able an argument as he could. He said it was demoralizing to public life and subversive of the independence

of parliament to have hon. members sitting in this House with promises of office in their pockets. Such men could not be independent, and to do away with that vicious practice, he introduced a Bill to make it impossible to appoint any member of parliament to any office of emolument under the Crown until two years after he had ceased to be a member. Every member of the present government supported that measure.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. No.

MR. SPROULE. Will the hon. gentleman tell me who did not?

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. I do not know one who did.

MR. SPROULE. The hon. gentleman has either a very bad memory —

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. I challenge the hon. gentleman to name one who did.

MR. SPROULE. Several members spoke in it and supported it, and if they did not support it by their speeches, I do not know what they did. The hon. minister has made a gratuitous statement, not founded on fact.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. My statement was that there was no division on that Bill.

MR. SPROULE. I did not say there was, but I say that hon. members of the government supported it and the hon. gentleman said they did not.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. Who did?

MR. SPROULE. Several members, but I cannot give their names just now.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. The hon. gentleman's statement was that there was not a member of the present government, then in opposition, who did not support the Bill. I say that the statement is without any foundation.

MR. SPROULE. I said that so far as I know that there was not a member who opposed it. Was there one who spoke or said a word against it? Did the hon. Minister of Marine oppose it?

MR. TAYLOR. He advocated it.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. I did not.

MR. SPROULE. Not one of them raised his voice against it, but to-day they are so



much ashamed of their conduct that they are trying to creep out of the small end of the horn by saying that they did not support that Bill. But if they did not speak in its favour, they did not oppose it and supported it by their silence. How many members of parliament have been appointed to office under the government during the past three years? The hon. member for Halton (Mr. Henderson) gave the names of thirteen who have been appointed either to offices of emolument under the Crown or to the Senate, and who were members of this House when appointed. This was done in deliberate violation of the principle laid down by the Postmaster General, who is to-day a member of that government, and looked up to by the people of Canada as one who, at least, ought to endeavour to carry out the principle which he advocated before he came to office. Yet, this practice which the Postmaster General said was demoralizing and undermining the freedom and independence of parliament, is being carried on to a greater extent by this government than ever before by its predecessors, and that hon. gentleman has not a word to say either in condemnation of this course or in explanation of his own very strange conduct.

We were promised also purity in elections. The changes were run on that cry on every hustings in this country, and by none was this great principle more upheld than by the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen). To hear him speak you would have thought that there was nothing in him but what was of the most unsullied purity. You would think that it was utterly impossible for him to do anything wrong; that he could not, under any circumstances, support a party that did anything wrong; and that if there was the slightest scintilla of evidence to show that even his own party had been guilty of electoral corruption, he would be the first to condemn it. But what has that hon. gentleman to say about the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Holmes) and the means by which he secured his seat in this House? Did the evidence brought before the Committee on Privileges and Elections show that it was by the exercise of purity that he obtained it? Was it to further purity of elections that so much money was spent in that constituency in order to return its present member? Was it the exercise of purity in elections that enabled the hon. member for Brockville (Mr. Comstock) to reach this House? I was in that last election, and I never saw such a demoralization of the people, such corruption practiced, so much money expended and promises of office given since the first day I set my foot in that constituency up to the present. And the hon. member for North Wellington, I believe, was there helping in that election, and he had not then a word to say against the devices there being resorted to. What kind of purity of elec-

tion did hon. gentlemen opposite practice in North Grey, when they elected the hon. member who is to-day Minister of Customs? Were they living up to their promises then? I took part in that election, and I know that we have about 200 affidavits showing that electors in that constituency were deliberately bought up by means of money furnished by the Reform party and their agents, and some of them were bought three times and paid the cash. We hold affidavits showing the men from whom they got the money, how they were purchased, where they were purchased and the amounts they got to support the hon. member for North Grey, who to-day has a seat in this House by virtue of that kind of purity in elections. I have lived in the county of Grey for forty-five years, and I never saw such a saturnalia of corruption in all the elections in which I have taken part as in that election which returned the hon. Minister of Customs to this House. Who helped him to carry his seat? The hon. member for North Oxford (Mr. Sutherland), who is now a member of the cabinet. Who else assisted him? W. T. R. Preston, who is now, I was going to say, on ticket of leave, but who is instead receiving a big salary to stay away in England lest he might be brought before the election courts in this country or the parliamentary committee. Cap. Sullivan was another who, it is said, helped in that election, and Sam Hewitt, Linklater, Thomas Lewis and Duncan Bole, some of whom were employees of the local government. We found many employees of both the local and provincial governments in every constituency where elections were going on, helping the government candidates, and yet, there is not a word from the hon. member for North Wellington in condemnation of such nefarious conduct. These are men sitting in this House, supporting the government who were elected, I am convinced, by the most unblushing bribery and corruption ever perpetrated in Canada, and yet, we are unable, on account of the tactics of the government, to inquire into these matters and show to the world the extent of that bribery and corruption. Who were the men that were guilty? Many of them are civil servants, some employed by the local government and some by this. When we wanted to bring them before the courts they could not be found. They had fled the country, like Linklater and Bole, and, therefore, could not be subpoenaed. But when their month's pay comes round and the pay sheets have to be signed, there is no difficulty about their signing the sheets and getting the money. And yet the Attorney General has the unblushing effrontery to declare that these men cannot be found. Does that look like honesty? I say that from the time the present government came into power up to the present, every by-election, at least in the province of Ontario, has

been carried, I believe, by the most unblushing corruption that ever was known in this country. If we had been able to bring these cases into court, as I endeavoured to do, we would have left a record which would have been a disgrace to them for all time to come. I ask them, was their promise fulfilled which they made, when they said that if returned to power, they would give the people purity of election? They may call this purity, but we know it by a different name. They were going to exercise economy, and particularly they were going to give no more subsidies to railways. The Patron's platform was no more subsidies to railways, and the Liberals, declaring that to be their platform, also, were ready to take Patron candidates wherever they could find them. But did they stop subsidies for railways? By no means; they increased them, violating not only their own platform, but the platform of the Patrons, a representative of whom is sitting before me now, the gentleman who asked me a question about binder twine. If that hon. gentleman can go back and square his conduct before the Patrons of this country, it will be done by some legerdemain that I and many members in this House know nothing about.

Now, I have only given a few of the promises they made to the people of this country, but I have shown that in every case they have deliberately misled the people, they have refused to carry out the promises they made, and have done the very reverse of what they said they would do. And, now we are asked to pass a motion praising them for carrying out their pledges, to eulogize them for what they did. We sometimes say that whatever there is good in the policy they have carried out, they got from the Conservative party. They pretend that there is great benefit in the preferential tariff, that it is a benefit to Canada, and a benefit to England as well. I would like to ask them where they got that? Would any one of them unbosom himself so far as to tell where they got it? If they will not tell, I will tell where they got it, because I heard it before they came into power. They got it from the late Dalton McCarthy, who laid it down in 1896, and asked the Conservative party to take it up. The Conservatives refused to do so. And the Liberals adopted it.

as they adopted from the same source the proposed settlement of the Manitoba school question. And, they take credit for it today. It is well for them that Mr. McCarthy is dead. I know from conversations that I had with him, before he met with the unfortunate accident that deprived us of his presence here, that, had he lived he would have stood up publicly and condemned hon. gentlemen opposite for the way they carried out their policy. He admitted himself that it was his policy, and he was the party who gave it to them. If there is any good in it; they are indebted to him for it, and they ought to be generous enough to give credit where credit is due. If they do not, it is only another evidence of petty larceny, so pronounced through their policy in every part of it. I think I have said enough to convince the people of this country that hon. gentlemen opposite have not carried out their platform in any respect. And, we are asked to-day to slobber over them and eulogize them because they gave this preferential tariff, so valuable, they say, to Canada. We are now going to thank them for it, and the people of the country will not thank them. They may get their own supporters. I was going to say servile supporters, and at least they have supported them in everything. They are obliged to get one of their own friends to move a motion thanking themselves and eulogizing themselves for what they have done. They cannot get it from any other source either in the House or in the country. They are a mutual admiration society; if they do not admire themselves, nad prais' themselves, nobody in this House, or in the country will. They are entitled to all the credit they can get from it. But, when the dissolution of this House comes, whether it be early or whether it is late, when an appeal is made to the great electors of this country, and the people are asked to say either the hon. gentlemen have carried out their promises, or not, I am very much mis-taken if they are not told by the people: We do not believe you carried out your promises; you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; we will turn you from power, and put others in your places, whose policy we approve, and upon whose promises we can depend.

