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MR. MCINERNEY'S SPEECH

In The Tariff Debate. [CONCLUSION.]

Mr. Charlton—He was mistaken nevertheless. At that period the balance of trade was in favour of Canada.

Mr. McInerney—I shall have to quote the figures to convince the doubting Thomases on the other side as to the facts I wish to establish. Mr. Butterworth further said:—

If hon. gentlemen of the Opposition do not believe these figures are accurate, I would like the figures to be printed in full in my remarks, and I will not trouble the House with them.

Mr. Mills (Bothwell)—You cannot have that done.

Mr. McInerney—I see that this was done by Mr. Butterworth himself, who said that in order to save the time of the House he would not read the figures, but would incorporate them in the report of his speech.

Mr. Mills (Bothwell)—They can do that in Congress.

Mr. Mulock—We are under the British flag.

Mr. McInerney—Then I will take the time of the House to quote the figures:—

Table with 3 columns: Year, Imported into United States from British North America possessions, Imported into British North America from United States. Rows for years 1854-1866.

The figures for 1864-65-66, conclusively prove and substantiate the argument made on the Government side of the House in connection with reciprocity during the various years. We admit there was during some years of the Reciprocity Treaty a fair degree of prosperity in this country, and that we did during certain years, from 1854 to 1866, ship largely to the United States.

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fields, the brawn and the skill of their country, the people of the United States were compelled by the force of circumstances and the magnitude of that war, to send abroad at high rates and great prices for all the products they could possibly obtain for the purpose of feeding their immense army.

Mr. Davies (P. E. I.)—Do you think that the period of the Reciprocity Treaty was an unmixt evil for Canada? Mr. McInerney—I think that for many years the reciprocity treaty was one that did not do Canada any good, that it conferred little or no benefit on this country; and I ask the hon. gentleman (Mr. Davies): That if it was such a great thing for Canada as he claims, will he please tell me why, from 1873 to 1878, when the Liberal or Reform party were in power, they could not get a reciprocity treaty.

Mr. Davies (P. E. I.)—Will the hon. gentleman permit me to ask him just one question? Why, if reciprocity—

Mr. McInerney—That is an Irishman's way of answering a question.

Mr. Davies (P. E. I.)—Why, if it was an unmixt evil, did the hon. gentleman the other day commend the Government for trying to obtain it?

Mr. McInerney—The hon. gentleman does not seem to apprehend the sense of my words. The treaty in force from 1854 to 1866 was a treaty based on different lines altogether from the proposal that my hon. friend the Finance Minister made in Washington. The Minister of Finance made a different proposition. He made his proposition, if I understand it in this way: That the treaty that would be brought about under his proposition must be a treaty having an eye to the interests of the Empire in the first place, inasmuch as we should not put on duties against the interests of the United Kingdom; that it should be a treaty based on lines that would allow a living at least to the manufacturers of this country, and that it should be mainly on agricultural products, the raw products of this country, with such a list of manufactured articles as would be consistent with the best interests and prosperity of Canada.

Mr. Laurier—I thought it was a renewal of the treaty of 1854 that they wanted.

Mr. McInerney—I do not think so, and I do not believe so.

Mr. Laurier—But the Government say so.

Sir John Thompson—No.

Mr. McInerney—I do not think the Government said so. I was present in this House during the session of Parliament and I heard what was then said on both sides. I have endeavoured to make myself cognisant, by reading, of what has taken place and I must with all deference, contradict the leader of the Opposition by saying, that what he says now is not what the Minister of Finance said last session.

Now in 1878, after the party then governing the country had failed for five years to bring about reciprocity, at a time when this country was almost in despair, when the people were leaving it in all directions between 1873 and 1878, and rushing off to the manufacturing towns of New England; there was a policy proposed by the late right hon. Sir John Macdonald, which was accepted by the people and which has remained from that time to the present the settled fiscal policy of this Dominion. I wish to say a few words with reference to that policy.

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stop the exodus, or what could they do tomorrow to stop the exodus? I assert boldly before the people of this country and in the presence of member of the Liberal party here that the National Policy has done much—no matter how you deal with it in other respects—to keep in the country the brawn, and bone, and muscle, and brain of our people. I do not wish to be understood as denying that we have had an exodus. The point that I wish to make is: That the exodus has been less from 1878 to the present time than it would have been if the National Policy was not in force. That is incontrovertible. It is an axiom, it does not require proof. It is as true as this: That the square erected on the hypotenuse of a right angle triangle is equal to the square erected on the other two sides.

Mr. Forbes—The Liberal party is the square on the hypotenuse.

Mr. McInerney—The Liberal party is the square on the base; there is nothing upright at all about it.

Mr. Forbes—The hon. gentleman supported the Liberal party.

Mr. McInerney—The hon. gentleman did not.

Mr. Davies (P. E. I.)—Might I ask the hon. gentleman what year he began to lean over?

Mr. McInerney—I would ask the hon. member to ask the hon. gentleman who sits on his left (Sir Richard Cartwright) what year was it that he began to lean over? The hon. gentleman from Prince Edward Island may be of opinion that consistency is all on his side, but I state this in the presence of the House and in the presence of the country: That I never was a Liberal, that I never belonged to the Liberal party, so-called, that the elections I ran in this country, I ran as an independent, that even during my last election I ran as an independent; but that by the foolish policy adopted by hon. gentlemen on the Liberal side I have been diverted from their side of the House altogether upon these questions. I wish to tell hon. gentlemen here that I have endeavoured with a fair mind, impartially as I could, to study these questions out for myself. I have looked at the record of both parties, I have looked at the policies of both parties, and I am driven to the conclusion—much as I admire some gentlemen on the Opposition benches—I am driven to the conclusion that in men, in ideas, and in policy the Government party far surpasses the other. Now, Mr. Speaker, having gone more extensively than perhaps I should have into the question of reciprocity, and the questions that arise from it incidentally, I would like to say a few words on the policy inaugurated in 1879. That policy was promulgated for the purpose of giving new hope to this country. That policy had for its aim, the purpose of giving at least an equal opportunity or a coin of advantage to the producers in Canada over any other country. It may have been, if you like, founded on a certain degree of selfishness; but it had first and above all as its central idea, the interests of this country at heart and in view. I do not think that at this late date there is much necessity to discuss the abstract question of protection and free trade. That has been pretty well threshed out both in the country and in the House, and where hon. gentlemen on the Opposition make a mistake, where the hon. gentleman from Charlotte (Mr. Gilmore) I think makes a mistake, in is treating this question of free trade and protection as an abstract question. This question can only be treated in the light of the conditions and circumstances of this country. It is not an academic question. This is a Legislature not an academy, in which we are debating a subject of this nature, and we should have constantly and at all times in view the fact that it must be treated from the standpoint of the conditions surrounding us. Now, this policy arose out of the necessities of the situation in 1879. Our people were leaving us in crowds; they were going to the manufacturing centres of the United States. That policy was based upon the necessities of the time, because we had against us at that time what I can at least call American unfriendliness; we had to contend with the newness of the country, the want of capital, and the absence of skilled labour. To make up for the disadvantages of these conditions, it was necessary for us to look around and endeavour to find some plan for meeting them, and this policy was adopted. Now, has it done all that it was intended to do? That it has not performed all that was expected of it is no reason why it should be condemned; but if it has succeeded in any appreciable degree in fulfilling its purpose, then I claim it stands justified and self-approved before the people of Canada. What has it done? It has given our manufacturers a market; it has given us a buoyant revenue; it has built our great public works, or enabled us to build them; it has sustained, and even advanced the credit of the country. Was this country in 1879 to dispair by the wayside hopeless and sitting down, or go

forward to the fulfillment of its destiny if this country was ever to become a nation it was absolutely necessary that the great wheat fields we possessed in the west should be opened up. In order that the shortest and quickest route to the sea should be obtained for the products of that great territory, it became necessary that a great railway should be built at enormous cost, and, in undertaking that gigantic work, the only thing that enabled us to go into markets of the world and borrow the necessary money was the fact that the National Policy had given us a largely increased revenue and kept up our national credit. This policy has been national, not only in a fiscal sense; it has been national in a broader sense. It has tended to unite the people of this country by many bonds. And its mission is not yet accomplished, for, having by railway and canal—constructed at great expense, I admit, but still not greater than the needs of the country demanded—having carried to the seaboard the products of the west, there still remains to be accomplished a measure which is in the air, which I have heard mooted of, of granting a subsidy of three quarters of a million dollars to enable Canada to have a line of steamships across the Atlantic that will enter into fair and open competition with any other line on the face of the globe. This policy has done what? It has, if I may use the term, bridged the Pacific ocean; it has established a line of railway communication from Vancouver to Halifax, it will give us a fast line of steamers from Halifax or some other Canadian port to England, and it will in time I am convinced put a belt around the world, if not, as 'Puck' said in 60 minutes, at least in 60 days. We are so situated that that policy must be carried out, for this is a national policy, not only in its fiscal aspect, but because it has enabled this country to go forward in the construction of great public works and to bind the provinces together as one. Now, I think it would be a very strong arraignment of the fiscal part of the National Policy if the contention of hon. gentlemen in Opposition could be proved that the policy is opposed to the interests of the poor man and in favour of the interests of the rich. It is not hard to prove that this is not the case. The figures to prove it are not necessary for me to read them again. But I will quote the tables from 1878, and compare them with the tables for 1892, to show the amount of taxation imposed on the necessities of life for the poor. Taking those articles together—they are very numerous—I find that in 1878 the necessities of life largely used by the poor, paid a duty of \$5,305,938, while in 1892 they paid a duty of only \$3,067,419. On tea the duty paid 1878 was \$611,313, while in 1892 it was only \$8,261. Some person on the Opposition side of the House said to-day that tea was not a necessary of life, or as great a necessary as coal oil. That is the blind way in which these hon. gentlemen would seek to guide the legislation of this country. While it may not be said that tea is an absolute necessary of life to the poor man, practically it has come to be so, much more than oil, because in the poorer districts of the larger towns and cities oil is not generally used for lighting purposes. Molasses, which is commonly used by the poor, paid a duty in 1878 to the amount of \$235,177, and in 1892 to the amount of only \$70,277. Sugar, which has now come to be looked upon by the poor man as one of the necessities of life, paid duty in 1878 of the amount of \$2,515,656, while in 1892 it paid only \$77,828. And here it would not be out of place for me to say that I think one of the wisest features in the revision of the tariff which has been brought down to the House is this particular detail. By the removal of the duty on sugar up to 16 Dutch standard, the sugar that will be admitted free is a sugar that is generally used on the table of the poor man, and on that of the middle classes too—as a prime necessary of life. Therefore, this change will be hailed as a boon to the poor people of the country. Now, cotton goods paid a higher duty in 1878 than in 1892, for in 1878 they paid a duty of \$1,243,349, and in 1892, \$1,115,237. Provisions, meats, &c., paid, in 1878, a duty of \$322,437, and in 1892 \$321,811. If you turn, Sir, to any good book, you will find that while in 1878 they paid a duty of \$293,304, in 1892 they paid \$493,373. Fruits—not at all a necessary of life for the poor man—paid in 1878 a duty of \$182,062, and in 1892, \$516,973. Furs, largely used by the richer classes, paid, in 1878, duty to the amount of \$49,806, and in 1892, \$516,973. Gloves, chiefly kid, paid in 1892 \$228,078. Gold and silver goods paid, in 1878, \$40,496, and in 1892 \$72,156. Hats, chiefly silk, paid, in 1878 \$184,515, and in 1892, \$256,912. Jewelry paid, in 1878 \$47,404, and in 1892 \$57,718. Musical instruments paid, in 1878, \$87,868, and in 1892, \$169,365. Perfumery, in 1878, \$5,853; in 1892, \$10,555. Silks and satins, in 1878, \$246,669, and, in 1892, \$751,452. And so I might go on through the whole list. I shall finish by taking up tobacco and cigars. In 1878

they paid duties, \$1,770,032, and in 1892, \$3,326,590. Taking all the articles enumerated in the list, the luxuries of life, used principally by the wealthier classes, paid in 1878, only \$7,379,488, and in 1892, \$13,978,877. From this one thing is abundantly clear, and that is that the point made against the tariff that it bore most heavily on the poor man is not true. That brings me, having spoken of the policy in operation from 1878 down to the present, to the revision with which we have to deal with just now. I may say here that there are in the Opposition, gentlemen with varying opinions with regard to fiscal policy. The hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. Gilmore) differs as widely as the poles asunder from the hon. gentleman from Queen's (Mr. Davies).

Mr. Davies (P. E. I.)—No.

Mr. McInerney—Well, one is an out-and-out free trader, and the other does not tell us exactly what he is. He prides himself on the fact that he never pronounced himself an unrestricted reciprocity man, or a commercial unionist. Well, these gentlemen oppose have varying doctrines, as I admit, parties in Opposition will have, naturally. I also admit that we on this side have varying degrees of doctrine on the question of protection. We have high protection men, as there are high protection men in the country behind us, and we have men who still cling to the doctrine of protection, but want the tariff brought as low as possible, as long as it will allow the manufacturers to have a fair living and supply the home markets. When the revision of the tariff came up, it must have been expected that numbers of gentlemen supporting the Government would make known their views. And they did so. Hon. gentlemen have taunted us with saying that the Government did not consult their supporters in this House. Sir, they did consult them. They promised their supporters in this House and in the country that they would take them into their confidence, that they would at the earliest possible moment, go round the country, see what the manufacturing industries would stand, and what could be taken off in the interest of the poor man and the agriculturist. The Government did that and they have brought down a tariff, which I think, must meet with the approval of all who give it fair consideration. Has not the tariff, in its present condition, a tendency to favour the poor man? I think it has. In taking off the specific duties, and imposing a valorem duties alone, it goes a long way in that direction. If a poor man buys a hundred yards of cloth, he will, under a specific duty, pay a higher rate than does the rich man who buys the same quantity of cloth, but of more valuable material. But when the ad valorem system alone is imposed, each one is taxed according to the value of the thing he buys.

Mr. Edwards—They have been fifteen years finding that out.

Mr. McInerney—You do not give them credit for finding it out now; and if they had found it out fifteen years ago, you would still be finding fault. As the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) said, but one thing will satisfy hon. gentlemen opposite and that is that they should occupy the Treasury benches. Now, the fact that the duties have been reduced on the low grades of woollens and cottons, which are largely used by the poor man, will operate to his advantage. The fact that the duty on coal oil has been taken down by the Government in fifteen months to the tune of one-half what it was—

Mr. Mulock—Oh, oh.

Mr. McInerney—Yes; last year the Government did take off to the tune of one-half. They have taken the duty off twice to the same extent. And as these things are called the necessities of life by hon. gentlemen opposite, they should be content with what the Government has done in this respect. The Government have also favoured the farmer in this tariff. There is a cut in the duty on agricultural implements from 35 to 20 per cent, which must be a great boon to the farmers of the Northwest. And I am informed by the hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) that the taking off the duty on lumber has knocked on the head the combine that existed in the west, and will be a great boon also to the people going out banding operations in that part of the country. Now, I have no doubt that the Government would go down to the duty on our moved the people down there would be much better pleased than to have the duty retained. I admit that if we could come down and say the duty on coal oil has been removed altogether, they would be pleased much more than now to see it on. I suppose if you went to the farmers of Ontario and told them that the duty was removed on flour, they would not be as well pleased as if it were kept on. And if we went to the miners of Nova Scotia and told them the duty was removed from soft coal, they would not be at all satisfied, so that the different sections must come to this final conclusion, that every part of the country must be taken into consideration in the

(Continued on page 8.)