

LIBERALS HONORED FIELDING.

Great Banquet in His Honor at Halifax.

TARIFF WILL BE ADJUSTED,

He Says, To Suit New Conditions as They Arise.

HON. A. G. BLAIR'S ELOQUENT SPEECH.

Halifax, Dec. 12.—The banquet at the Queen hotel last night in honor of Hon. W. S. Fielding Minister of Finance, Nova Scotia's favorite son, was a great success, both in point of attendance, and the excellent character of the speeches.

Hon. G. H. Murray, the local premier occupied the chair and at his side were four dominion cabinet ministers, who had come from Ottawa to join in the testimonial of their colleague; while around the banquet board were men of prominence in every department of life in Nova Scotia.

Veterans, too, were there, who had fought with Hon. Mr. Fielding in the stormy days preceding the defeat of the last Conservative administration in Nova Scotia, who had shared with him the triumphs of later days, and who now joined with young Liberals in acclaiming a fellow-countryman, who was already in the front of Canada's great men.

The dining room was handsomely and appropriately decorated with flags and mottoes. There were 250 guests.

On the chairman's right were Hon. Messrs. Fielding, Paterson, Prefontaine, D. C. Fraser, M.P., Dr. B. Russell, M. P., E. B. Wade, M. P.; and on the left, H. J. Logan, M. P.; Colonel Thompson, M. P.; C. F. McIsaac, M. P.; Hon. W. Ross, Hon. A. G. Blair, Sir Frederick Borden, and Premier Tweedie of New Brunswick.

Brilliant speeches were made by Premier Murray, Hon. Messrs. Blair, Borden, Tweedie, Patterson, Prefontaine and others. The speech of the evening, however, was by the guest of honor, Hon. W. S. Fielding:—

Mr. Fielding Talks Tariff.

Mr. Fielding received a great ovation on rising to respond. After dealing with his early political career and local political affairs he launched into a discussion of dominion affairs.

"Well, can I not say for at least six years the Liberal party at Ottawa has given this country a period of good government, a period of peace, a period of progress, a period of unexampled prosperity?"

"We are able to point out to you in every department of the government the administration of affairs by the Liberal party has been making for the development and building of this country."

"In the first place we are able to point to six years of prosperous and sound finance. This is an important matter. It is as important to the nation as it is to the individual that the business transactions shall be placed upon a sound financial basis."

"Our friends on the other side recognize that, and they predicted again and again that the entrance of the Liberal party into power would be a period of deficits and disaster. What followed?"

"Let us make a comparison. Take the six years of Conservative government before we came into power and take the six years before us. And if you sum up the two periods of six years each, that while in their six years they ended the period with a net deficit of \$2,000,000 we ended with a surplus of \$27,000,000."

Mr. Fielding then pointed out the great growth of Canada's trade since the Liberals came into power.

"We have only been in power six years one-third of the 18, and while the Conservatives increased the trade of the country \$66,000,000 in 18 years, we have increased it \$180,000,000 in one-third the time. Then, we can say, you did not lose anything if we have the same rate of increase. What would be an answer to our friends?"

"But what is the fact, we do not come before you and point to an increase of \$22,000,000 in the trade of the country in six years (the proper proportion), instead of \$66,000,000, the figures in 18 years. We point to the fact that in six years the total trade of Canada has been increased to \$180,000,000. (Cheers)."

"That prediction of Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been realized. We are able to prove the prosperity of the country today not only by statistics but also able to prove it by the prosperous condition of Canada."

"I am far from claiming that our tariff is perfect and not capable of being amended in some particulars. Let us not deceive ourselves. We have never had a free trade policy in this dominion and we are not likely to have it within the memory of any men in this meeting."

"We have always attempted to adjust the tariff to meet all classes. There always has been a measure of incidental protection. If you put on a duty of 15 per cent. on something made in Canada and something made abroad, incidentally you confer a protection to that extent. It will be always so for a considerable time to come."

"It is a question between a moderate and a reasonable tariff and a question of high and excessive duties which prevailed under the national policy."

"I do not say, and I repeat it again that the tariff is perfect. It is five years since that tariff was prepared, but slight changes have been made. We have held that it is a great improvement to the country to avoid frequent tariff changes. Every business man appreciates the matter of tariff stability. It is a matter that sometimes we had better bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of."

"It is better to bear with some little inequality than to open up the tariff question and to disturb the equilibrium of trade. But changed conditions at home and abroad may necessitate looking over these items from time to time."

"I am not here to offer anything new on the tariff question. The last budget speech made was the authorized statement of the government of Canada, but I say that we are not going to tie ourselves to every item in the tariff, if there is an inequality which needs to be remedied, we are prepared to consider and remedy it."

"If there is a new condition created by the establishment of some new industry, if there are conditions abroad which are interfering with our trade, in short, if anything has happened we do not propose to shut our eyes to established facts; but we do say that where the country has prospered under this tariff there is no reason for getting up an excitement for the purpose of having a return to the high duties."

"My respected friend in the opposition, Mr. Borden, thinks he has a policy; he calls it 'adequate protection.' Sir, I think the people of Canada are too intelligent to be caught with chaff. They will want to know the meaning of 'adequate protection.' It is a meaningless phrase."

Hon. Mr. Blair's Speech.

Hon. A. G. Blair, in responding to the toast of the cabinet, spoke of the splendid gathering and the enthusiasm with which the names of the several ministers had been received. He was sure the hearts of the Liberal party beat in the sincerest sympathy for the distinguished leader, and hoped that he would long be spared to stand at the head of public affairs.

In his opinion, no man in Canadian public life was more worthy of esteem and confidence than the minister of finance, in whose honor this banquet was held. It had been prophesied that when men, accustomed only to provincial affairs, were called, in 1896, to enter the dominion arena they would be found to have narrow and cramped views; but when history comes to be written, it will be shown that no man had ever filled the portfolio of finance with more broad-mindedness or more success.

He had grappled with the greatest problems and had won a series of notable victories. The finance minister had cordially supported all efforts of his fellow administrators to further the interests of the several departments. Had it not been for this co-operation, he (the minister of railways) would not have been able to raise the I. C. R. from the rut in which he found it, and made it of increased worth to the maritime provinces and more valuable as an asset to the Dominion of Canada.

The Liberal party must be given the credit of holding steady the helm of the ship of state. The people had arisen from the condition of stagnation which had once paralyzed industry and were prepared to stand behind the projected enterprises of a progressive administration.

If the Liberal administration decided to extend the I. C. R. still further to the west, such policy would meet with no opposition from the people of the lower provinces. He thought he could promise the Liberals of Nova Scotia that whatever was necessary to do that would be of service to Canada, east and west, the present party in power would be found prepared at the proper time to undertake.

Hon. W. Paterson and Hon. R. Prefontaine also responded to the toast.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier wined from Hon. Springs: "Very sorry that I cannot attend tonight's banquet which our Nova Scotian

friends are tendering to my trusted colleague and friend, Fielding. However, I join you heart and soul to do him honor, and the fullest honor is not more than he deserves."

Arctic Rink.

GRAND OPENING

XMAS NIGHT.

The above new and mammoth Rink will be opened to the public on the night of Dec. 25th at 7.30 p. m. The following is the scale of prices for tickets:

SINGLE ADMISSION—Men 25 cents, Ladies 15c.

SEASON TICKET.

Gentlemen \$5.00; Ladies \$3.00; Boys and Misses, (12 to 16 years of age), \$3.00; Children under 12, \$2.00. Family—Two of one family residing under same roof \$7.00. Each additional member of same family residing under same roof \$1.00. Sale of tickets will commence on Saturday next, DEC. 13th, at the following hours, between 12 and 1 o'clock, noon, 4 to 5 and 7 to 8 p. m. daily until further notice.

R. A. CROPLEY,
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