

JU82

B 541

1887. 6, 1906.

TO THE ELECTORS OF GLENGARRY.

GENTLEMEN,

When you invited me nearly two years ago upon very short notice to become a candidate for your representation in the House of Commons, I did so in deference to your judgment, although under a sense of disadvantage owing to the long interval in my residence in your midst and interruption in my personal acquaintance with you. The representations then made were justified by the large vote recorded in my favor; and now that you are pleased to renew the invitation with the emphasis of mature reflection, I think I am justified by your choice as well as by what I learn of the growth of opinion in the county, in entering the field with good hope of success. Two years of better acquaintance have not diminished my desire to serve you, and I hope have not been unfavorable to me in your estimation. Two years of common suffering with you have very much confirmed my belief in the necessity of a change in your representation.

I propose to show you that opinion has not grown here and throughout the land without something to feed on. But before discussing the main issue upon which you are clearly asked to decide between the Government of the day and those who, like myself, assail its policy of finance, I desire to point out the utter collapse of the other and then important pretensions upon which the friends of the present Government based their right and claim, as they so often and so euphoniously stated it, to "hurl from power" the Government that preceded them; their wiser method for the construction of the Pacific Railway; and the determination to practice greater economy in the ordinary expenditure-

Having exhausted the plan of water stretches, and having proved the impossibility of carrying on public works by the agency of partisan servants and supporters of even a pure Government, the policy of aiding the construction of the Pacific Railway "by utilizing the Dominion lands," after the manner of their predecessors has been finally and fully returned to. Meantime a large yearly expenditure has been carried on through agents who, when summoned to give account of their methods, defy parliament; and what have we got as the result: a very small part of the road located; a matter of 200 miles under contract, that when finished will have no permanent connection; the bit of branch road that may give us access to Manitoba through the United States, proposed to be leased upon terms that will not bear the scrutiny of parliament, and the first minister (and a reform minister) threatening what he may or may not do in defiance of parliament: then we have the Neebing Hotel, and the Fort Frances lock; and an investment of \$3,500,000 in rails that are not for the facility of traffic or travel, but accumulating interest and rust, and charges for storage.

In the ordinary expenditure we have no reduction—no pretence now

5012
78
164

of reduction; but, while there is a reduction of about \$50,000,000 in the aggregate trade, and about \$3,000,000 in the revenue collected, it is considered sufficient for the Government to say that the increase of \$1,400,000 in 1876 over 1873, in the cost of collection, was provided for by the legislation of the previous Government; the real reason being that every avenue of collection is crowded with appointments, made for merit in supporting a pure administration. As for the higher "tone," and the "regard for the well understood wishes of the people," of which we have had so much "promise to the ear" from the Reform party when in opposition, how utterly has it been "broken to our hope," let the record tell of the session just closed, in which the Government has led in every vice of personal abuse and vituperative speech, and has developed every form of arbitrary obstruction to fair and reasonable inquiry. But the main and clear issue upon which appeal is made to your decision, is the question, Is it in the power of Parliament to assist by legislation the industrial interests of the country? I maintain that such power does exist, and venture to say that the negative was never adopted by the responsible representatives of any people in the world before ours; and it is one for the decision of which it is not necessary to obtain evidence from Manitoba, nor from the Departments at Ottawa—the proof lies within your own observation and your too bitter experience.

For some time after the advent to power of the present Government there existed widely a belief that the logic of events would induce a change in their free trade proclivities; so much so that representatives were elected (notably in the City of Montreal) on a distinct assurance that the Government would be prepared to reconsider that theory. All that is now dispelled—the illusion fled upon the accession of the Minister of the Interior. "The fly on the wheel," is the simple metaphor that illustrates your attitude in the declared opinion of that new ruler. And now, in the face of a deficit for the two past years amounting to \$3,361,000, the Minister of Finance, after an eloquent description of the "unlimited field open to the enterprise of our agricultural population, of which there are many cheering signs that they are heartily disposed to avail themselves," leaves the deficit to be made up by the fruits of those cheering signs, or by time, or by chance, or anybody else that may, because "the issue which is about to be presented to the country would involve, if decided against us, so great and so radical a change in the whole fiscal system, and our mode of collecting the revenue, that I desire the voice of the people to be heard on the question." (See *Budget Speech*, February 1878.)

The Minister has come to recognise, too, that—though no fiscal policy of our own can help us—

"It is impossible for us, a small people of about 4,000,000 of souls, placed along almost our whole frontier in direct contiguity to the American nation, not to be seriously affected by the fiscal policy they have chosen to pursue."

Further on he draws some novel conclusions:

"I desire to say not only that I do not see in their policy any reason for imitating them, but that they themselves are beginning, I think, to admit that they have made a very grave and serious error, and that there is a very strong disposition to retrace the mistake they have committed, and that they have become convinced as far as Canada is concerned, that their policy has resulted only in driving us to seek other markets, and

“ has deprived themselves of the middlemen’s profits they would otherwise “ have enjoyed.”

You will, probably, have been as much at a loss as I have been in looking about to discover the evidence that the Americans have begun to “ retrace their mistake,” assuming that they have made a mistake, or have begun in any way to do for us what the first instinct of self-preservation should teach us to do for ourselves; and you will find it difficult to imagine what fraction of our trade or profits have escaped their grasp.

When I had the pleasure of meeting a number of you in February of last year, I drew attention to the continual increase of our imports from the United States, and the diminution of our exports to that country; that process has continued, and whilst our importations from and our exports to Great Britain nearly balance each other, the following is the official return :

| | 1876. | 1877. |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Goods entered for consumption from the | | |
| United States..... | \$46,070,033 | \$51,312,669 |
| Exports to the United States..... | 31,933,459 | 25,775,245 |

An increase for the year of our imports of \$5,242,636, and a decrease for the year of our exports of \$6,158,214, making an increase for the year in the balance of trade against us of \$11,400,000, which balance against us reaches in the aggregate a sum over \$25,000,000. You will probably be surprised at the magnitude of these figures, even although you have felt the crushing effect in detail in the many forms that result from scarcity of money, for it has gone to pay the great balance of twenty-five millions of dollars. You farmers have felt it in the low price of everything you have to sell, for you have no consumers at home, in the absence of employment for your sons and your teams in the manufacture of lumber that has in former years given them wages,—oats, on the other hand, being this year exported from the Ottawa Valley, of course at a ruinously low price, and your young men, the bone and sinew and hope of the country, are seeking new fields in Manitoba, or expatriating themselves to swell the wealth of the United States. Those of your number who are engaged in trade (or have been so), have felt it in the crippling of your trade by competition without reciprocity until the number of bankruptcies is twice as many, relatively to the number of traders, as in the United States. The Minister had the courage to congratulate the House “ that at last the tide seems to have turned in some degree.” I fear you cannot feel nor see the fresh rolling tide, nor are you likely to do so until there is such a change of public policy as will help you to protect yourselves.

The old settlers of Glengarry among your number can remember the time when the forests around your homes yielded timber for the cutting that brought a reward for your labor, and the virgin fields of your clearing, protected by the neighboring woods and the snows of winter, yielded bountiful harvests of wheat. There was a foreign demand for your timber, and your wheat was required to feed the constantly recruiting immigrants, or, if there were a surplus, the facility of growth enabled you to meet the charge of seeking a foreign market. Capital kept pouring in, and public works were carried on to provide for your increasing trade. But your season of pupilage is past. Your forests are receding and your lumber begging a market. Your exhausted fields will no longer produce wheat, and yet you are dependent upon foreigners for the manufactures for which you are not producing sufficient to pay. It is true you are trying the

temporary expedient of exporting cheese and cattle, and it is well that you can tide over a term in this way, but you well know that grass and cattle will not grow perennially without change any more than pine trees and wheat; they are governed by laws more sure than those of the Dominion. Then you will have to do as the people of Old England did (and manifestly the sooner it is done the more you will save), that is, learn to make your own goods, and so not only market your bushel of wheat, but your bag of potatoes (that I am told to-day are going a begging at ten cents a bushel because there are no home consumers!), and your poultry, and your fruits and vegetables, and every product of field and garden and barn-yard, and not only so, but the value of your products, as well as that of the goods you buy, will remain for the improvement of your own country. It is the same policy that the people of New England adopted (and that gives them such a "pull" over our folly to-day) after they had gone through the usual phases of a new country, and had exhausted (as I hope we have nearly done) the delusive doctrine of free trade, built upon cries from across the sea, a doctrine indeed that was adopted in England only when it was assumed that her skill and facility in manufacturing was such as to assure the retention of the rest of mankind as tributaries. But the laws of nature and the instincts of self-preservation have been too many for the wisdom even of the British manufacturers, and to-day "the tide seems at last to have turned in some degree," and we read in a pamphlet circulated in England by a distinguished public man (Lord Bateman) these ominous words:

"We have to compete on unequal terms with other countries who are robbing us of our profits, paying nothing to our exchequer, and "underselling us at the same time..... Granted that the theory of free "and unrestricted commerce with all quarters of the universe is as bold "as it is magnificent, granted that the idea, by whomsoever originated, "is both grand and glorious in its conception, granted that to give effect "to it has been the aim as it has been the long-accepted policy of succes- "sive governments, it cannot be denied that the sting of want of reciproc- "ity has, from the first, checkmated our philanthropic efforts, and obliged "us now to confess, after thirty years trial, that, in practice, our free "trade is at best but onesided; and that while we are opening our ports "to the commerce and manufactures of the world, free and unrestricted, "other countries, without conferring on us any reciprocal benefit, are "taking advantage, without scruple, of our magnanimous, but disastrous " (because one-sided) liberality..... We have tried free trade, and it "has been found wanting..... We have done our best to impress other "countries with the reasonableness of our policy, and in return they "scoff at our blindness, and turn a deaf ear to our remonstrances."

Could words convey a more graphic description of our miserable position in relation to the United States, and if the fellow countrymen of Cobden and Villiers, and Peel and Bright are beginning to hark back how far a field must be our village philosophers who have donned the old clothes of those economists without regard to our entirely different circumstances.

Your own experience is daily teaching you the fallacy implied in the statements by the men of the present Government, "that no one "industry can be protected but at the expense of some other," and that, the expedients of protection by legislation are but "taking money out of "one pocket and putting into the other." With respect to the first pro-

position, it would be true if applied to *only one* industry, but the fact is that your industries protect by supporting one another. With respect to the second, is it not a very harmless amusement in comparison with taking money out of both pockets, and getting nothing but perishable goods to replace it, as in the case of the twenty-five millions of dollars to which I have referred. Then, there is the special argument addressed to farmers that the "national policy" means higher prices for the goods you buy. A simple instance will suffice in reply: the industry of sugar refining, that has been closed under the present Government, is dependent much less on a high tariff than on a low rate of duty on the raw material. The result of the existing state of things has been not only to deprive Canada of the profits of manufacturing and carrying of the greater part of the sugars entered for consumption last year, to the value of \$5,255,165, but I am informed on the best possible authority (that of one of the largest dealers in Canada,) that at least one cent per pound has been added, (paid in profits to foreign "middlemen,") on every pound of sugar of your consumption since the closing of the Canadian refinery, a sum of \$500,000, for last year alone, and which is itself much more than the differences in money asked as protection by the Canadian refiners before closing their works. And you have, moreover, been fed upon sugars in which every possible form of adulteration has been discovered, until, to-day, it is an object of as much interest to the dealers as it is to the consumers to have the industry of sugar refining restored.

There is another feature in this connection: You can readily understand that the importation of sugars of all kinds of the value of \$2,038,851 in 1873, as compared with \$615,972 last year, from other countries than Great Britain and the United States (*i. e.*, sugar-growing countries), facilitated the exchange of trade with those countries to that extent, or a larger proportionate extent, for it is volume not value that gives measure of that facility, and the loss of importation has been in the cheaper and greater bulk of sugars.

The national policy that I advocate with Her Majesty's loyal opposition is embodied in the simple proposition "Our own markets for our own people," and will form the basis of a balance sheet upon which we can run alone, and let me beg of you to remember that there is no proposal to increase taxation, (as is pretended by free-trade demagogues), but only such adjustment of the well-defined aggregate, (about 23 millions of dollars), to meet the public requirements as will help to secure employment to our people and so to increase our population and wealth.

There is an item of expenditure in canal enlargement that deserves a word of notice. It has reached some millions under the Government, and possibly some of you may have felt some temporary sop of benefit from the outlay; but it has not come by a process of "taking money from one pocket and putting it in the other," but by the process of increasing your debt, whilst the means of paying are being lost or thrown away. The policy of enlargement was adopted by the late Government, when it counted a yearly surplus and a rapidly growing trade; it has been carried on in the face of a deficit and of trade driven away; and here certainly, if the Government had had any policy of economy, it should have come in.

I find that in this County, as probably in others, some matters of local and personal interest, that have no immediate relation, have been made factors in the question of your representation. One of

these is the Coteau and Ottawa Railway. You are aware this question was characterised by one of Her Majesty's Judges as having been "unfairly" used as "an election dodge." I regret to notice that the Railway is still held dangling as a prize for those who prove faithful to the political party of the President and Directors. No man who has any interest in the County can be indifferent on the question of the construction of this Railway; but I ask you what man of the Corporators has ventured a dollar of his own money in it? Where was the list of shareholders that should, in all fairness, have been forthcoming when an extension of time was obtained in the late Session of Parliament, with some statement of the payments on capital account? This you do know, for there has been a necessity for proving it, under their own statement, that two at least of the Directors have taken money out of the enterprise, and (under the name of wages) turned it through their own pockets. How much more has gone into similar channels is matter on which you have no information. You know, however, that you are paying—and have been for some years paying—taxes for the interest on your contribution to the Company that was organised to build the road; and you have no knowledge of any other use of your money except as an "election dodge." One word more on this subject. I yield to no man in the interest we have in common in such a road, and will do what I can with any body or party to assist in obtaining it; and I think that its construction will become a necessity when some part of the railway westward towards the Pacific is made—and I submit that all the evidence so far gives us the best hope of such a link being formed under another administration than the present one.

It has been made a matter of complaint on the part of my friends, and, strange to say, much more on the part of my opponents, that I have not visited you from door to door. Now, my friends, there is a word to be said on this matter—perhaps two words, and perhaps there may be two sides to it. I should like very much—much more indeed than my opponents imagine or pretend, to know every elector in the county, and I trust that you will acknowledge that when there has been occasion in the natural and ordinary way for our meeting, I have not been insensible to the duties of a friend and neighbor. You are aware, however, that a great part of my life has been devoted to pursuits and spent in fields that took me away from among you; but I ask you candidly to say if you think I have returned to make my home in your midst for the purpose (as has been absurdly stated) of cajoling you into sending me to Parliament! I am sure that no man of you who knows me will accuse me of any such motive. Again: I find it has been the custom in the county for your representatives to visit you from house to house, and in the way of business—so much so that the discussion of public questions in public assembly has until quite recently been considered a secondary means. The position of your representatives and their relations with you in business or professionally made it almost a matter, of course, that they should have a wide personal acquaintance among you. Is there, however, a man in the county who will say that this has been for your benefit or satisfaction, or if it has not rather been for their objects. Or, is it pretended that you have each and every one individual interests that are to be known and cared for apart from the interests of your fellow countrymen at large. If any man says so or pretends it (for such absurdities are not usually put in categorical form) he is either no wiser than he who tells you that "the

manufacturing interests do not assist the farming interests," and that "if all the towns of the Dominion were swept off the map, the country would still remain, and could create and build up new cities," (a very superfluous work we would think); or he is a knave who is practising upon your good nature.

I beg you to think of these things when candidates and their emissaries travel over miles of country merely to ask about your crops, and your wives and babies, and all your collateral relations; and to remember the while that there are interests of vital importance common to the Dominion at large, and of wide and far reaching significance dependent upon the wisdom of Parliament.

I have been asked why I do not appeal to you as an "Independent," a term that has been long used with advantage in the country—advantage to the candidate, I beg you will observe. You have known of such a thing as independence of principle, a condition in which the representative is ready for any bait of office or influence that may fall in his way from any party. I am not an Independent in that sense. But I claim to hold the higher independence of not being responsible on the one hand for the sins or imperfections—real or implied—of any Government of the past; nor, on the other hand, of entering public life in quest, by necessity or choice, of the crumbs of bread, or the honors of any Government of the future. This is the sort of independence that I desire to see in the representative of my native county, and the sort of representation of the country at large of which there is crying need; and on this platform I claim the consideration of every voter who desires progress, and who is independent in the only true and good sense.

I shall look (whether in Parliament or not) to the members of the Opposition for the men of character and capacity to form such a Government as we need, and of which I see no hope or promise in the party now in power: and I have good hopes that they may add the warning of the present Government to the wise lessons of all experience, and form their cabinet upon the basis of merit, taking the best men wherever they may come from.

I shall watch with interest what may transpire in the possible interval before the election is brought on, and may have an opportunity of discussing new and further developments.

Meantime, I remain,

Yours, faithfully,

JOHN McLENNAN.

By the Lake,

Lancaster, 16th May, 1878.

Sarat Rock
G.W.
