

RALPH SMITH AND DUNCAN ROSS EXPLAIN ISSUES

Crowded House Hears Liberal Leaders Explain Their Party's Attitude on Different Pertinent Questions--Criticize Sir Richard McBride on His Land Policy and Inconsistency

The text of the speeches made by Messrs. Ralph Smith and Duncan Ross to a crowded house in the Westholme Opera House at the Liberal rally last week are printed here for the benefit of those who were unable to be present.

Mr. James Conley of Vancouver also made a stirring address on "Imperialism," which preceded the address of Mr. Ralph Smith, who said:

"Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

"My associations and my trip to Prince Rupert, as you know, have been, with the one side an Irishman—Mr. Conley—and on the other, as you just as well know, a Scotchman. An Englishman myself it was not considered the proper thing to split political association unless we had every country represented.

"In front of me I have the ladies and gentlemen of Prince Rupert, and the ladies, I am happy to say, in very large numbers. An audience composed, as I see, of Liberals and Conservatives alike. I am delighted to see my old friend Mr. William Manson and his wife and family. After these long years of personal toil and anxiety to put him on the right track, I am delighted to know that after these long years he at last thinks it the proper thing to come along and listen to an intelligent discussion of the issues of the day. I labored long and hard with Mr. Manson and I always hoped that I would be able to direct his feet into the narrow path, but when he thought it a proper thing to leave Nanaimo, outside the jurisdiction of my needed influence and continue his wicked course I abandoned all hope and prospect and I don't even think tonight that I will be able to make him a convert. I am delighted, however, to see Mr. Manson present, and as long as the light holds out above vile sinners, may return.

"I am delighted also with the very large number of ladies present in this audience. In the real sense of the word, I am a true ladies' man—that is, I believe in equal rights for men as well as women. As a matter of fact, one of the fundamental reasons for my support of the women franchise is principally the opportunity and the anticipation of getting the rights of which I am deprived today.

"Twelve years ago in the local house I brought in a bill to enfranchise the ladies to give them a vote. I never heard a good reason why they should not have a vote as well as the men, excepting the reason given just a little while ago by a man in a certain county in England where they were voting to contest the county whether or not they should give women votes. The ladies organized a campaign, had their election day, had their platform, their ballots, their ballot boxes, had all equipment and machinery for this purpose to test this question. A lady was distributing literature in the entrance when a man walked in and she handed him a pamphlet. He asked: 'What is this for?' She replied: 'Read it.' And he said: 'I can't read it.' 'All right, I will read it for you,' she said, and went on to read it and described how they were out to get votes for women. 'I don't believe in getting votes for women,' he answered. 'Why not?' she asked. The reply was: 'They are too ignorant to vote.'

"I am giving no flattery when I say that the experiment of enfranchising women in Australia and a considerable number of the states of America has resulted in the morality of the country being maintained and raised; that the social and moral aspects are secured and raised as a consequence of women having a vote. So that if ever I get the power, in the local Legislature especially, you may depend upon me for extending the democracy of this country in helping to get the ladies a vote.

"The last time that I was in Prince Rupert I was on a deputation. I thought we had settled all political difficulties, and I am ashamed to think that after those magnificent offers and the measure of enterprise that we manifested to come all the way to Prince Rupert and brought with us a large Liberal delegation that you continued to go back to the 'fresh pots of the Tories.' Now, tonight I am for the second time in Prince Rupert, not a member of the government, but an ex-member. The years of toil and

sacrifice are without avail and I find myself defeated as a candidate in the last election. Grant you, it is evidently not very much of a virtue in the public mind. Either that or some principle of subterfuge has taken possession of the public mind, and I think I will be able to demonstrate before I am through tonight the insidious and dangerous influence that so worked upon the electors that they decided, in my opinion, against the best interests of Canada to change the party in authority.

"I make no contribution in opposition to my opponent except the instrument of reason and argument. I never believed that you could help your cause by abuse. I am here tonight, therefore, not to abuse my opponents but to the very best of my ability instruct the public. To show as best I can the delusion and, if I may be permitted to use stronger words, the political deceit that has been exercised on the public mind of this country and has determined its present Dominion complexion.

"Now the Liberals in British Columbia are non-existent. That may be a matter to smile about, but five years after this you will think it a catastrophe.

"When I was young I was fighting for representative government in England, and being very young took very prominent connection with democratic reform movements and one of them was the enfranchisement of the men in England and the absolute necessity of proper intelligent representation. British Columbia has disposed of constitutional government and has sent men of one mind and one opinion and one complexion, with one supreme authority to do and say what they like with the interests of this great province. I say, however lightly the people of British Columbia may regard the condition today, with the very best conception of the intention and honesty of the men who regulate and manage the affairs of British Columbia, whom I give every credit, even with the best intentions, power in the hands of one man is not good for the man and is dangerous to the public interests. I would not trust absolute authority in the hands of one man even if he were an angel and I say the greatest reflection is not upon McBride or Bowser. The greatest responsibility for the political authority today, being so dangerous because of its unanimity, is due to the electorate of this province. I say there is absolutely no representative government in this province today. If my opponents will forgive me, I will say what I said in Vancouver at the time of the last provincial election. There I argued for the necessity of an opposition. We never contended for the authority of power; we never believed it was possible to get it, but we did believe that there was sufficient appreciation of the necessity of political independence that would influence the electorate of this country to see to it that at least half a dozen men stood in opposition in that Legislature. They may be doing right, they may be doing wrong. Nobody knows and nobody seems to care. For there is no possible existing machinery that can disclose the possibilities of wrong, for my friends, the members of the Legislature, will forgive me if I say what I said in Vancouver: 'Every one of them are as good as rubber stamps in the hands of McBride and Bowser.' In that House today, composed of forty men, they will sit, and I venture to think and anticipate that they will not have a single protest from any one of those thirty-five men against anything that the government does at the next session of the Legislature. That, in my opinion, ladies and gentlemen, is not a good thing for the men and a very bad thing for you. Nobody to ask a question, nobody to question a single proceeding, nobody to present an intelligent suspicion. Not the slightest word except from Parker Williams and the Socialists, whom nobody takes any notice of. Nobody to represent or to resist what may be clearly seen on the face of the proposition, iniquitous to the interests of the people of the province. I regard that, sir, as a serious calamity in this province.

When I was in the House of Commons, Sir Wilfrid Laurier brought in a proposal to pay the leader of the opposition a salary, and I will point out the difference between Mr. McBride and Sir Wilfrid in that respect. After the last election in the city of Victoria

very serious question. According to the manifestation of things today that ought to warrant the necessity of a member of the House asking some questions and defending the rights of the people against the perpetration of what they now consider very common things emanating from the government today. But I am not going to discuss the political issues

ing cost of living, against the fact that the great masses of wage-earners in the United States with salaries stationary for the past forty years had to exist against a scale of constantly rising cost of living, until the democracy of that country had an opportunity to make a protest, and they made it without making any mistake, and they made it so absolutely certain

country and especially about the trade conditions of British Columbia, will admit that whatever we may have thought in theory and however we may have determined our decision to vote Liberals out and Conservatives in, however much theory we may have about it, there is not an argument in favor of it. Why so? I was just looking over the trade returns from Ottawa which came to my hand a week before I left Vancouver. What do they say to the party who said we must not have any trade with the Yankees. What do they declare. They declare that in the year 1912, sixty-five per cent of Canadian imports came from the United States, and I wonder if they were all bought by Liberals. What I said was, you may have all the theory you like about it, and you may be able to drive the public into a panic, and you may bring about as a result the defeat of a strong Government, but when you come down to a proper analysis of practice and facts, there is not a thing in the statistics of this country to support it. Sixty-five per cent of the imports of Canada this present year under the administration of government who declare we must not trade with the Yankees. Sixty-five per cent of the imports of this country came from the United States; 22 per cent of the imports of this country came from Britain. Think of it. Think of the great loyalists, these gentlemen in power. Is there any change in regard to trade with Great Britain? The total trade with Britain under Mr. Borden's administration has been reduced two per cent; the total trade of Canada with the United States has increased five per cent. It is all right to preach; it is a very different thing to practice. 'It is a good thing to get in,' as Mr. McBride says, 'but when you get in, the next thing is to keep in.' A good thing to get in on, but I am afraid Mr. Borden cannot carry out the formula that it is a good thing on which to stay in power on.

and Commerce, had to negotiate an arrangement with the Trade and Commerce Department in Washington to make provision for the transportation of wheat through an American channel three months after the cry of "no truck or trade with the Yankees." Mr. Foster made arrangements to relieve the trade conditions of this country which would have ended in a final panic. I say it is utterly impossible to carry on business in this country without calling in the reciprocal assistance of the United States.

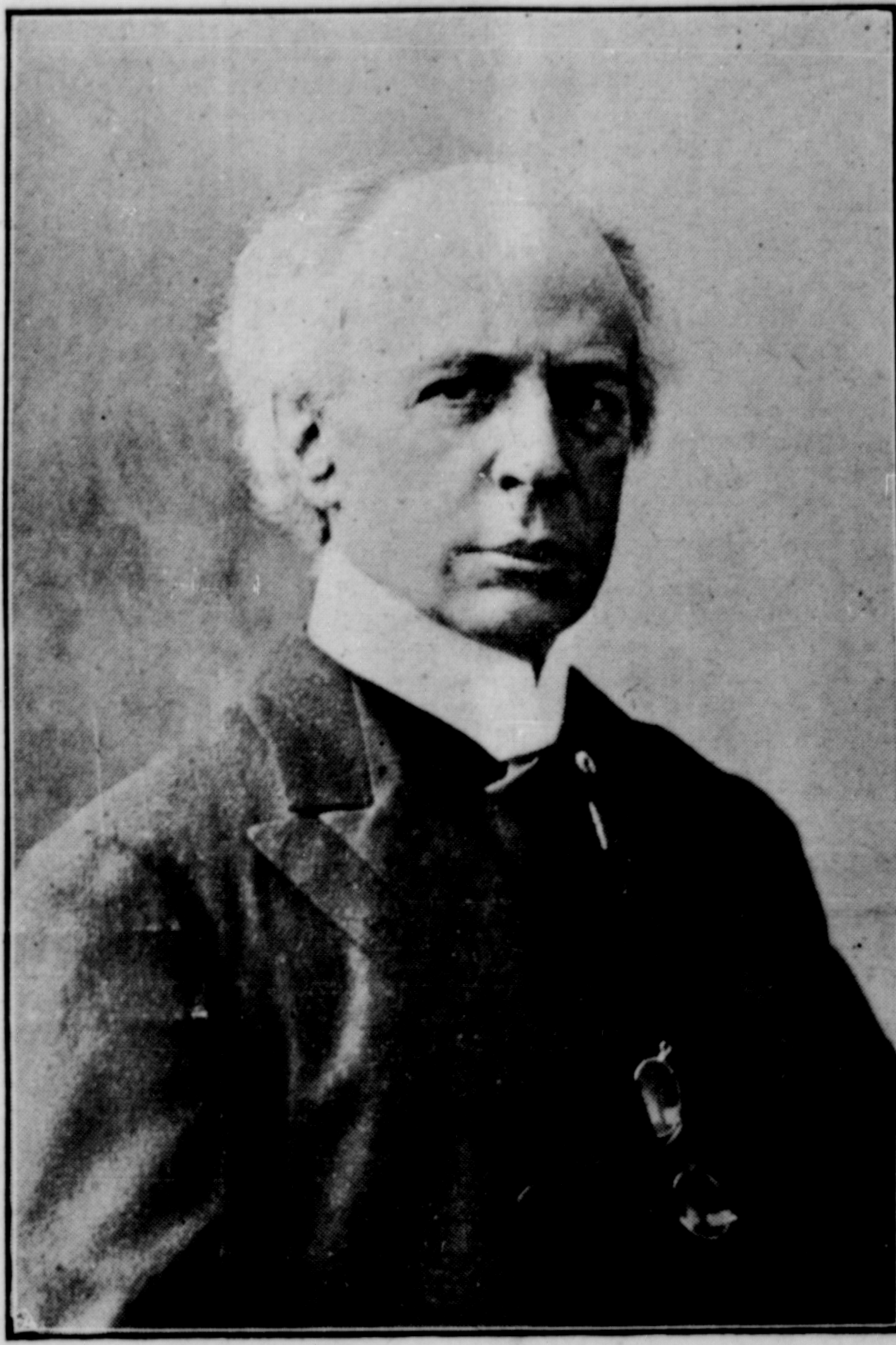
If a superintendent of fisheries is wanted in this province, where is he found? The Tory goes to the States and finds his superintendent for the administration of fisheries in this province. If McBride wants a man to look after the highways of this province, where does he go? "No trade or traffic with the Yankees!" Look at the men employed by the McBride government, and on the road rollers the picture of the flying eagle and the inscription "Made in the United States" and underneath you will see "the property of B. C. Government." He wants a superintendent for Strathcona Park, which, according to the reports of the Minister of Agriculture, is going to be a model in British Columbia. Where does he go? Does he trade or traffic with the Yankee? Where does he get his superintendent? Why, ladies and gentlemen, just recently these patriots, this man who saved Canada from annexation with the United States and has bound the Empire more closely together by defeating the Liberals—he goes to the United States, gets a gentleman and pays him \$15,000 a year, the highest salary paid any official in Canada with the exception of the Governor General.

Take the administration of his land laws. Does he confine them to British subjects? In this great country, this great northern country, just recently a million acres of land in the Peace River district and other communities adjoining it, has been placed in the hands of whom? Lord Beresford to make certain they are giving it to loyal subjects, and other gentlemen of the Old Country? No; but to Yankees. An American syndicate controls today through operations of the McBride government in council a million acres of the land in this northern zone. Of these professing loyalists there is not one that would give 10 cents extra over the market price on account of patriotism. Ladies and gentlemen, they are like everyone else—they buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest.

We are not afraid of the Yankee. I never felt the heartstrings of my loyalty affected when I was trying to put up an argument in favor of better trade relations. I always felt that I could do business with an American without being estranged from the Old Country. The thing is an absurdity that we cannot have commercial trade relations and preserve our loyalty. The exercise, I say, and the operations of the Borden administration from that day to this demonstrate very clearly that at any rate Sir Wilfrid Laurier was right in his proposal.

The only good thing that ever I knew the Conservative government to do in the public interest was in 1894 when they took the duties off rough lumber and interpreted the provisions of that act to allow lumber to come into the northwest. What happened? After the last election the manufacturers of Canada rushed to Ottawa and called up the Minister of Customs and commanded him to put a new interpretation on this customs clause which provided for the amplification of customs duty against rough lumber simply to financially accommodate the lumbermen of British Columbia.

I was challenged repeatedly when I was a member of this province and asked why I did not support duty on rough lumber. My answer was this: that there never existed a condition or position where national property came into the hands more easily or cheaply than the lumber into the hands of the British Columbia men who owned it, and there is no place so blessed with the opportunity for cheap lumber, bringing tens of thousands of



SIR WILFRID LAURIER

toria, Mr. McBride wrote a letter of thanking you to the public of British Columbia expressing his appreciation of the general and very unanimous way that the people of this province had expressed their confidence and trust in him. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, with eighty or ninety members in his opposition, provided for the leader of the opposition a salary corresponding to the salary of his own minister. Why did he do so? Because he saw the necessity in the interests and the integrity of this country to provide the necessary time and opportunity for an intelligent leader to watch the proceedings of the House and defend the people against anything that might emanate wrong even from the government. If I am not mistaken, I said to the Premier then: 'It is a funny thing for the people to pay ministers to do their business and then the ministers to pay another fellow to watch and see they do it,' but that was the principle. It was absolutely necessary that a man who had the confidence of the opposing party in the House should give all his time in order that the public interest might be protected, but in this province they take pride in the fact that the party is absolutely unanimous and has complete responsibility to do what they like in the Legislature. In my opinion, it is a grand opportunity for some big man to stand up in the House this next session and declare to the people of this province that he is adverse to something his own professed friends are doing, even if it reflects discredit upon his own party. We are calling for a man to do this. Whether we will give him or not is a question and a

except to advise you of that responsibility.

"I have had experience in the Dominion House. I take special interest in Dominion questions and I want to discuss with this audience a few matters in connection with Dominion policy as it affects the people of this country. To begin with, I want to make this statement. Mr. Borden has been in power for one year, has held one session, has administered the affairs of this country for about fourteen months. I want to make this statement, that everything that has happened under the authority of Mr. Borden will inform the intelligent public more than ever that the position taken by Sir Wilfrid Laurier on a variety of important questions was the right position and that the operation and exercise of Dominion authority today will demonstrate the whole of that position. I think I can demonstrate that position to this audience.

I want you to look at the proposition I have stated. Look at it in the hands of the Borden Government and I want you to look at it as in the hands of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. On the basis of that, let us look at this serious question of reciprocity with the United States. I must remind you that just ten days ago the democracy of the United States performed a revolution which strikes a direct blow at high protective tariff, and gives the best possible support to Sir Wilfrid Laurier's position. Mr. Wilson, the President-elect of the United States was elected as a national protest against high protection, against the manufacture of trusts and combines, against the ever increasing

that in my opinion, they sounded the death knell of high protection in the United States.

I am not going to preach free trade. In England I was a free trader. I have my theories today regarding it, but at the present time you cannot have free trade in Canada. You have to have a system of tariff, and the only argument that ever I heard advanced in this country that had any impression on me as a believer of low tariffs, was the fact that we were alongside a great country of eighty or ninety million people that had a high tariff, that it developed an enormously growing country, and it was therefore impossible for this country to operate a fiscal system that was so materially different against the chief competitor. In regard to trade on this continent I submit to that argument, but that is no answer to the proposition that when the United States desires to take its duties off articles that they want from Canada, and when Canada desires to take its duties off articles they want from the United States by common mutual agreement from both parties, I submit, that in my opinion, it is the complete answer to my previous argument for free trade.

But in September, 1911, I never heard any argument. I listened to the Premier of this province. I listened to the Ministers and I listened to the representatives, but I never listened to any argument. I listened to annexation, possible political annexation with the United States, but I never heard an argument, and I want to make this statement that anyone who knows anything whatever about the trade conditions of this

country and especially about the trade conditions of British Columbia, will admit that whatever we may have thought in theory and however we may have determined our decision to vote Liberals out and Conservatives in, however much theory we may have about it, there is not an argument in favor of it. Why so? I was just looking over the trade returns from Ottawa which came to my hand a week before I left Vancouver. What do they say to the party who said we must not have any trade with the Yankees. What do they declare. They declare that in the year 1912, sixty-five per cent of Canadian imports came from the United States, and I wonder if they were all bought by Liberals. What I said was, you may have all the theory you like about it, and you may be able to drive the public into a panic, and you may bring about as a result the defeat of a strong Government, but when you come down to a proper analysis of practice and facts, there is not a thing in the statistics of this country to support it. Sixty-five per cent of the imports of Canada this present year under the administration of government who declare we must not trade with the Yankees. Sixty-five per cent of the imports of this country came from the United States; 22 per cent of the imports of this country came from Britain. Think of it. Think of the great loyalists, these gentlemen in power. Is there any change in regard to trade with Great Britain? The total trade with Britain under Mr. Borden's administration has been reduced two per cent; the total trade of Canada with the United States has increased five per cent. It is all right to preach; it is a very different thing to practice. 'It is a good thing to get in,' as Mr. McBride says, 'but when you get in, the next thing is to keep in.' A good thing to get in on, but I am afraid Mr. Borden cannot carry out the formula that it is a good thing on which to stay in power on.

I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, it is a question of bread and butter. I say this for the benefit of some of my Tory friends, that in British Columbia in the year 1912, we consumed thirty millions of food products right in this province. How much did we produce? We produced fifteen million dollars of food products in this province, that is, in order to get breakfast, lunch and supper, the Yankee has to furnish half of the good products. There is not one of you who would not have objected if they had not done so. However much loyalty you may have, breakfast, lunch and supper is previous to loyalty. Is there any reason why British Columbia has to import fifty per cent of their food products? Is there any good reason why she should be taxed for so doing? I am not complaining that the Yankee sends us something. If he did not, we would go out of business, but I am complaining of the provincial politicians that declare to the world their loyalty and their belief in the prosperity of this country when except for trade relations with the United States we could not exist. Nature has determined that fact, and the position I take is that if we have to have products from the United States, I challenge a man to give any good reason why we should be taxed for doing so. I don't hesitate to say that the most fallacious bogey that ever drove the country mad was presented to the argument of reciprocity.

Mr. Wilson, the new president, will reduce the duties in the United States, and when he comes down a little bit, we will reduce them in Canada, and when both operations take place, the whole community will be benefited, so that so far as I am concerned, as time goes on Laurier's proposition in the beginning is demonstrated to be wise.

Let me give you another reason. Are we independent of the United States? Were we independent last winter of the United States? Three months after the Tories got into power in Ottawa Mr. Foster, Minister of Trade