

SIR CHARLES TUPPER

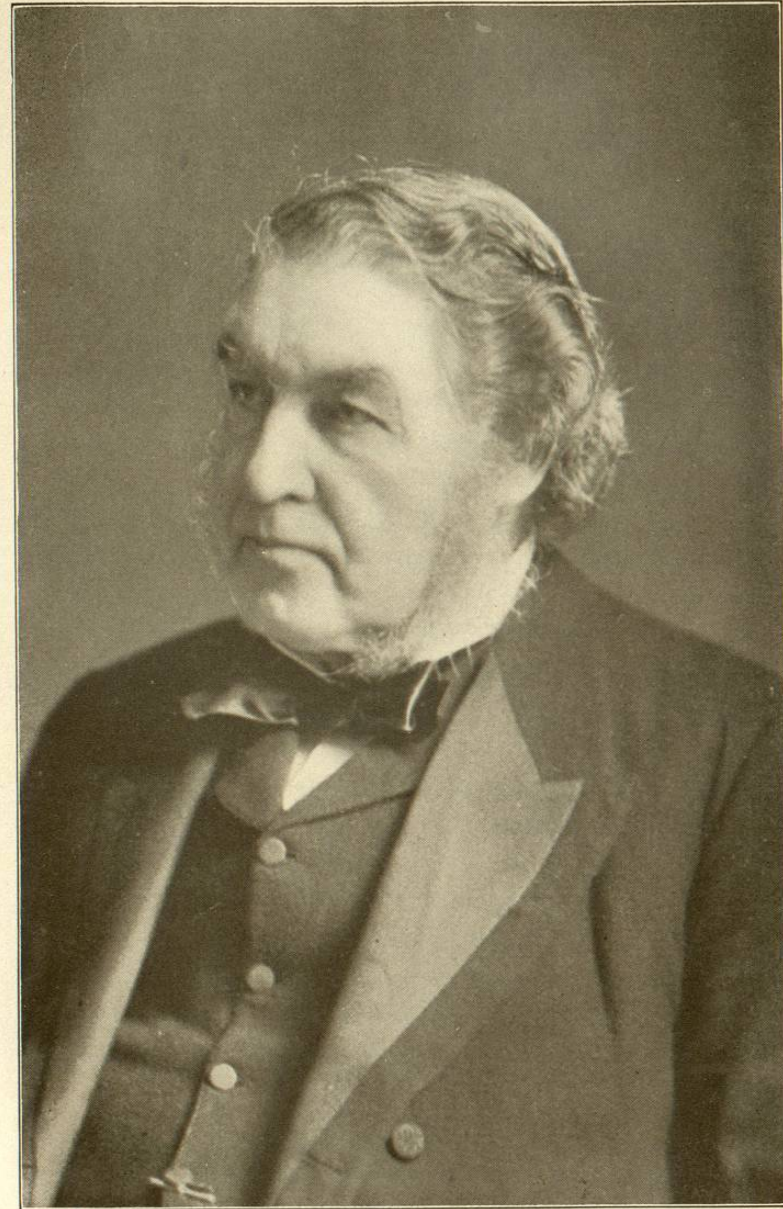
RIGHT HON. SIR CHARLES TUPPER, G.C.M.G., eminent Canadian conservative statesman, was born at Amherst, Nova Scotia, July 2, 1821. He was educated at Horton Academy, graduated in medicine at Edinburgh University, and returning to Nova Scotia began practice in his native town, and soon reaching eminence in his profession was president of the Canadian Medical Association, 1857-70. Entering the Nova Scotia legislature in 1855, as member for the Cumberland district, he identified himself with all the important legislation of the period and was provincial secretary, 1855-60. While in England, in 1858, on business connected with the Intercolonial railway, he conferred with a number of prominent statesmen regarding the project for confederating the Provinces of British North America. He was prime minister of Nova Scotia, 1864-67, during which period he passed the free school law, and after the union of the Canadian Provinces he sat in the Dominion House of Commons until 1870, when he entered the cabinet as president of the council. He filled the post of minister of internal revenue, 1872-73, was minister of public works, 1878-79, and minister of railways and canals, 1879-84. He was knighted in 1879, and in 1888 was created a baronet for his services in connection with the Fisheries Treaty at Washington. He was high commissioner for Canada in London, 1884-87, and after a year as minister of finance in the Dominion government was recalled to London as high commissioner in 1888. In January, 1893, he entered the Ottawa administration as secretary of state, and later succeeded Sir Mackenzie Bowell as prime minister of Canada. His party being defeated in June on the Manitoba School Bill, he resigned and at the assembling of the Canadian Parliament, in August following, became leader of the Opposition, while Sir Wilfred Laurier succeeded to the Premiership. Sir Charles is an aggressive political opponent, a great campaigner, and a forceful and at times eloquent public speaker.

IN FAVOR OF A PROTECTIVE POLICY

FROM SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS,
MARCH 14, 1879

I CONFESS that I am very much surprised at the forcible though fallacious address to which we have all listened for the last two or three hours. I did suppose, sir, that, brought face to face, as the people of this country have been under the administration of public affairs, by the honorable gentleman who has just taken his seat, with a condition of

(74)



SIR CHARLES TUPPER

things that is calculated to arrest the attention of every patriotic man in Canada, I did suppose that that honorable gentleman would feel that it was a duty he owed to this House, that he owed to this country, not to indulge in such animadversions as he has indulged in in reference to the proposals that have just been made to the House, but to lend to the ministry of the day and to my honorable friend, the finance minister of Canada, all the aid and all the assistance that he could, in order that some measures might be adopted to retrieve that position of affairs into which that honorable gentleman has largely contributed to bring this country.

The honorable gentleman talks of incapacity, talks of recklessness, talks of ignorance. I ask the members of this House who have listened to him for the last five years whether in the whole of this country can be found a more striking monument of all those excellencies than the honorable gentleman himself? Five years ago, when I ventured some modest criticisms of the policy that he propounded to the House, he expressed his regret that no finance minister of the then late administration had a seat in the House. That regret was not confined to himself. No man felt it more than I did. No one felt it more than the gentlemen who were associated with me, and I am glad to know that that feeling became widespread throughout the country; that every year the experience that the people of Canada had of the administration, of its fiscal and financial affairs by the honorable gentleman induced a deeper, wider, and stronger feeling as to the absolute necessity of bringing back to the aid and assistance of this country the gentleman under whose financial management it had prospered before.

The honorable gentleman himself has heard the plaudits given to-night to the budget speech delivered by my honor-

able friend, coming, I was going to say, from the whole House, so small was the number of those who did not join in applauding the able effort of my honorable friend that it seemed to come not from a section of this House, but from the entire chamber. I congratulate the House, I congratulate the country, that my honorable friend [Mr. Tilley] is back in the position he occupied in 1873—back in the position he occupied when the late government handed over to their successors in office the conduct of the affairs of the country, which was then in the highest condition of prosperity of any country on the face of the globe—back to the position he occupied when the honorable gentleman, instead of inheriting years of accumulated deficits, inherited years of accumulated surpluses—back, I say, to a condition of things that would compare favorably with the administration of public affairs in any country in the world. . . .

Now the honorable gentleman says he wonders the finance minister is not appalled at the spectre which is conjured up before us. Well, sir, I think my honorable friend, looking round this Parliament, which I am proud to say in my judgment, surpasses in independence, character, intellect, and talent any Parliament that ever sat within these walls, my honorable friend must see that the great mass of the representatives of the people are not appalled, and that if there is any spectre present it is in the honorable gentleman's imagination.

Let him look at Canada to-day and compare it with what it was when he assumed the financial management of this country, and what will he find? Where wealth, prosperity, happiness, and progress were in Canada he will find gaunt poverty and distress pervading the country from end to end. That is what he will find. I do not envy the honorable gen-

tleman his feelings when he casts his eye over the horizon of his country and finds here and there spectres gaunt with famine and distress; poverty where wealth existed before; hunger where plenty was known. I sympathize with the honorable gentleman when he feels that had he addressed himself like a statesman to meet the emergency as my honorable friend has met it, the prosperity we enjoyed when he took office would be enjoyed now.

There are spectres, but they are not spectres of which my honorable friend, the finance minister, need be afraid, and if his policy is what I believe it is, and if it has the effect in Canada it had before, he will have nothing to regret. We are told that it is un-British. When did it become un-British? How did Great Britain attain the position of prominence and distinction she occupies as a manufacturing country? Was it by a free-trade policy? Was it by unnecessary expenditure and deficits that all the interests of the country were allowed to become impoverished?

No. It was by protecting and fostering the industries of the country, by developing the great resources Providence had given to the country, that she became so great and prosperous. When she followed that policy long enough to be enabled to bid defiance to the world she changed her policy, believing that the example she was giving would be followed by other countries.

Unfortunately for England that policy was not followed by other countries, and the most thoughtful men, the most able statesmen, the most distinguished men in commercial circles are to-day turning their attention seriously to the question as to whether, in adopting that policy of free trade, England had not made a mistake, and as to whether it might not well, at no distant day, be reconsidered.

They say it is not British. But I say it is eminently British. From what source do we find the industries of Canada paralyzed? Is it from competition with England? No. That is fair and legitimate competition—a competition in which we have the protection of 3,000 miles of sea. That which breaks down the industries of Canada is the policy of unfair, unjust, and illegitimate trade on the part of our American neighbors who have their own market for themselves and can afford to send their surplus products over here at slaughtering prices, knowing that when they have thus stamped out Canadian industries they can put up the price and recoup themselves.

What about the iron industry? Every person who knows anything about the subject is aware that Providence has given us not only magnificent mines of iron and coal, inexhaustible and of the best quality, for the manufacture of iron in close proximity to the iron deposits. The moment that interest was established, and British and Canadian capital was invested in that industry—the moment Americans found that American iron was being driven out of this market—they sent their agents here to ascertain at what price iron could be bought. They said, “We can supply you with iron equal in quality and at less cost than you can obtain it elsewhere.” It is indeed well known that the agents came here and stated whatever was the price of iron in Canada they would supply it at ten per cent less.

That was not from a charitable disposition, or a desire to promote the prosperity of Canada, but from a desire to crush our industries and enrich themselves after our industries were destroyed. Under these circumstances it is not strange that the idea should force itself upon the minds of members of the government, looking to the prosperity of the country.

“It is necessary, not that we should adopt a hostile attitude against our neighbors, but that we should pay them the compliment of saying that their policy is so wise and just that we are disposed to follow it.”

I believe the result of this imposition of a duty on coal will be to bring about free trade in that article between the two countries. Nova Scotia coal, which formerly was largely shipped to New York and Boston markets, was shut out by a duty of seventy-five cents per ton. Was not free trade to be expected as the natural result, when the Americans find Canada declaring if they shut Nova Scotia coal out of the market of the Eastern States we must adopt a policy of protection to our own industry as they were protecting theirs, and give Nova Scotia coal owners the Ontario market. I believe within two years from the adoption of the national policy—not a policy of hostility to the United States, but one of following the system they had adopted to foster their industries—they will give us a free market for coal in the United States.

While adopting measures to meet the government of the United States by a tariff somewhat analogous to their own, and to protect the mining, manufacturing, and agricultural interests of Canada against the unfair competition of our neighbors across the lines, my honorable friend the finance minister also proposes to insert in the bill the statement that when the Americans shall reduce their tariff on these natural products we will reduce ours to the same extent, and that when they wipe out the duties altogether, we will admit their products free. At no distant day we shall enjoy all the advantages which we possessed under the Reciprocity Treaty.

I believe, in the interests of Ontario, it is a wise policy to develop the coal industry of Nova Scotia. That Province is

an important part of the Dominion, and twelve million dollars of capital invested in coal mines cannot lie dead and unremunerative without inflicting great injury on the whole country. Nova Scotia has common interests with the other Provinces and contributes to the general revenue and it is, therefore, the duty of Parliament to adopt all legitimate measures to promote and foster its industries. What would be the effect of pursuing a contrary course? In the present state of the labor market in the United States, coal can be produced at exceedingly low prices, and if the Nova Scotia coal industries are not fostered they will be crushed out, and the people so employed will go to swell the ranks of those engaged in building up that great country to the south of the line. Send your own people to populate the United States and what happens? When the coal industries of Nova Scotia are destroyed the Americans will raise the price of coal to the people of Ontario and they will have to pay it. And why is not coal a legitimate subject for taxation? Do you not tax cloth, hats, boots, and indeed everything that the poor man consumes? You are willing to tax sugar fifty per cent and impose heavy duties on tea and coffee. And where can you draw the line between fuel and the other necessaries of life?

My honorable friend the finance minister had reduced the duties on the necessaries of life by \$400,000 a year. He has decreased the expenditure for the year by about \$800,000, taking into account the sinking fund and interest on the additional debt that was required.

The honorable member for Centre Huron objected to the iron industry being fostered in the manner proposed. The honorable gentleman objects to coal being fostered in the same way. Does he not know that the history of the world

shows that every country that possessed coal and iron has risen to greatness just in proportion as it has developed those industries? This I know, that in England and Belgium, where coal and iron abound, the progress of those countries is indicated as by a barometer, and has risen just in proportion to the output of the coal and the development of the iron mines. The coal industries of the country will not only be benefitted by protection, but the very fact that these industries are promoted,—that there is an increased demand for the coal,—will lower its costs for consumption to every person who requires to use it. If a mine has a capacity for an output of 100,000 tons of coal and there is only a demand for 30,000, it will cost the miner \$1.50 a ton to put that coal at its pit's mouth, whereas if there was a larger demand he could bring it out at a better profit for \$1.25. So, looking at what nature has endowed this country with these deposits of coal and iron, I believe that a wiser and more judicious policy could not be contemplated than the policy under which these great industries are to have fair play, and to have the same consideration that all other industries are entitled to.

I did not intend to prolong these observations for two reasons, first, because it is not necessary, as the honorable gentleman, as I have already said, in his somewhat rambling speech managed to knock down all the men of straw he considered he had set up, and left little for me to demolish. But there is one thing I must refer to, and that is the denunciation of my honorable friend for allowing duties to be paid in anticipation of this tariff. Does he forget that he was so anxious to get money paid in, in anticipation of the duties of 1874, that he actually put it in the governor's speech?

Does not the honorable gentleman know that for three

long years we have been saying from these benches that the tariff would be reconstructed in this sense the moment we came into power? Does he not know that from one end of the country to the other we have openly put it before the country as a question of public policy from which there was no escape, that either this country must go to ruin, or that there must be a radical reconstruction of the tariff? But when there was no such expectation, when no man in this country dreamed of a deficit except himself—and he did not dream of it, because he had the evidence to the contrary before his eyes—the honorable gentleman knowing that, and having that knowledge within himself, put into the governor's speech the announcement that startled every man in this country, and drove them with a rush to the Custom-houses. And yet he had been denouncing my honorable friend of being guilty of a great moral turpitude, for declaring to this country that we intended to make this change in its fiscal affairs.

I have but one remark more to make and I sit down. I did not believe that any party necessity, that any feeling of jealousy of the gentleman who had gone before him or of the gentleman who came after him in the administration of the government, could have induced the honorable gentleman to invite the hostile action of the United States. I say the language the honorable gentleman used—the language that he unfairly, unpatriotically, and dishonestly used, because, sir, it is not true. I say that language was unworthy the mouth of any Canadian statesman. I say that declarations on the floor of the Parliament of Canada, going tomorrow morning down to New York and Washington, that we are at the feet of the Americans—the declarations that we are as clay in the hands of the potter, that we live by

their favor, that they have it in their power to adopt a policy that will crush us—I say that that was an unpatriotic statement, and I repeat that it is not true.

We have one half of this continent and not the worst half of it either. We have a country of divers resources of the most varied character. We have the great granary of the world, for a finer granary does not exist than the great northwest; and with this great and magnificent country and all its enormous resources, were we to assent to the view of the honorable gentleman, we should be unworthy the name of freemen, of the British origin of which we all pride ourselves—we should be unworthy of numbering among our people that great nationality descended from old France, having the same energy of character that has rendered France to-day one of the most prosperous countries—and under the protective system—that has ever been seen.

The honorable gentleman deplors the different nationalities and the different religions. Why, it is that which makes a country great. I say that this country is a greater country because there is a different race and a different language and a different religion. It has been found in all countries that nothing tends to stimulate the progress and prosperity of a country, and to develop all its institutions, whether civil or religious, more than a natural rivalry among freemen—that is to be found in such a country as this. Under these circumstances I trust never to hear from the mouth of any Canadian statesman in this House or out of it, the unpatriotic declaration that this great country of ours occupies so humiliating, so degrading a position as that which the language of the honorable gentleman indicated.