

party when in power in regard to the tariff question a different tone from that which I adopted when I was a member on the opposite side of the House, or a Liberal candidate. On those occasions I endeavoured to make it perfectly clear where I stood on the question. I also endeavoured to make it perfectly clear that I was not satisfied with the record of my party on that question. And I may say that I am very much dissatisfied with the want of progress shown by the Liberal party when in power on their much-talked-of pilgrimage towards "free trade as it exists in England." They did not make such vast progress as would satisfy me then, and it will not satisfy me now. I do not purpose making any further criticism; but when my hon. friends speak about dealing with the West, satisfying the West, they must remember that the West wants action. The West does not rely very much on opposition promises. The West is more likely to take cognizance of the performance of a party when in power. The West is not playing politics and is not favourable to the playing of politics by any person, and I do not think it will look with favour upon the present action of the Opposition, because the West will regard it as playing politics.

Mr. EMMANUEL B. DEVLIN (Wright): Before entering upon my remarks, I wanted to ask the hon. gentleman a question without wishing to interrupt him in his speech. Could the hon. gentleman suggest any other way than that we have taken by which we might bring this matter before the House in order to get an expression of view from hon. gentlemen on the other side?

Mr. LEVI THOMPSON: If I were going to suggest a way, it might better be done when the Budget is brought down. But I am not objecting so much if my hon. friends merely wish to place themselves on record. I placed myself on record before and I have placed myself on record here this evening as to what I think. If my hon. friends are actuated merely by a desire to place themselves on record, I have no objection to the method they have adopted. If I suffer by it, that is all right.

Mr. DEVLIN: My purpose in asking the question was simply to endeavour to establish in my mind just how sincere the hon. gentleman was, because I think hon. gentlemen in this House know me well enough by this time to understand that I do not want to make myself the judge of the actions of my fellow-men. But to-day

[Mr. Thomson.]

I have listened to a debate which has been somewhat marvellous. I gave very keen attention, as I generally do, to the speech of the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Michael Clark). I always admire his manner of speaking, and when he sat with us upon this side of the House I admired his earnestness. If I speak along the lines I speak to-night, I will make an open confession—it is said confession is sometimes good for the soul—that it is greatly due to the lessons which the hon. member taught me. He will remember quite well that for years we sat in this House as desk-mates. He said, upon several occasions since this session began, that he was the father of free trade in this House. Perhaps I will not go quite as far as that.

Mr. MICHAEL CLARK: If the hon. member will pardon me, I never used that expression about myself. I never called myself the father of anybody except four boys.

Mr. DEVLIN: The teacher?

Mr. MICHAEL CLARK: I never describe myself.

Mr. DEVLIN: Does the hon. gentleman say that he was not a teacher? Why, the hon. gentleman pointed out to me on a hundred and one occasions—and this is no breach of confidence—that I must be blind if I could not see that free trade was the only thing to save this country.

Does not the hon. gentleman remember how cleverly he put the matter when he spoke of the rays of the sun coming through the window, and turning to me, said: "Would you put a wall in front of those rays?" Does not the hon. gentleman remember that language? "Why," he said, "it is the same thing exactly when you try to build up a wall against the free entry of goods into this country." Now, I take it that my hon. friend was sincere when he said that; I may be credulous, but I certainly thought he was sincere. And when I heard him say this afternoon that this was not an opportune time for a resolution such as this, I began to think: Has my old desk-mate gone back on the principles which actuated him during so many years, simply because he has changed from a seat upon this side of the House to a seat upon that? We all have the privilege of changing our opinions, of course, and I hope that none of us is so glued to any one particular opinion in non-essentials that he will not change it on any account. But the hon. member for Red Deer has pointed out, not on one or two or three or half-a-dozen occasions in this House, but in season and