

basis of any principle; none is even suggested. Would anybody suggest a principle which justifies putting the steel industry, say, in such a position, or many other industries which are affected, and maintaining the duty on furniture at 30 per cent, or the duty on stoves at 25 per cent or on lawn mowers at 32½ per cent—can anybody suggest any principle for such a thing? I could go down the list of hundreds of articles and show that nothing else is the result of this wonderful budget.

Now, hon. gentlemen contend—I refer particularly to those to my left—that they are justified in supporting the budget. Why? Because last year stability was promised, and this year stability is destroyed. I should like

these members to listen during the 4. p.m. speech of the Prime Minister while he proves to you that stability is still maintained. Don't they expect it? Don't they know that every man on the other side of the House who supports the budget will contend in his defence that stability is maintained? Of course hon. gentlemen to my left are right, there never was a more violent assault on stability, not in the last thirty years, than there is in this budget; nor has the effect of that assault ever been more immediate and more apparent. Imagine the government suggesting not a reduction of duty of 2½ per cent on certain lines of goods as made last year—that is tariff revision—but a tariff reduction of 10 per cent and 5 per cent and 4 per cent and the wiping out of the tariff on whole lines of goods, that is not tariff revision; that is tariff stability! You can have stability and still, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) said last year, make necessary minor adjustments from time to time. But no rightly constituted mind would suggest that these are merely minor adjustments. These are substantial variations of the tariff, striking at certain vital and important industries of this Dominion. No, the promises of 1919 went by the board; but the promise of 1923 has gone by the board as well. The hon. member for Springfield (Mr. Hoey) who spoke yesterday said: Surely, surely though you believe in a protective tariff, you do not want it maintained at the price of perfidy, you do not want the government to break its solemn engagement of 1919?

Mr. HOEY: That is repudiating the mandate of the electors.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I am not so sure. Is the hon. gentleman quite sure that such was the mandate of the electors?

[Mr. Meighen.]

Mr. HOEY: I have not any doubt whatever.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I wish I could so easily be sure one way or the other. When you have three groups in a general election it is pretty hard to tell what the verdict of the electors is; and when besides you have the whole contest smeared with a cloudburst of misrepresentation it is still harder. Anyway, does the hon. member think that sixty-five members of this House who appealed to their constituents on the Laurier-Fielding tariff were elected to destroy that tariff? Does he think that the hon. member for Brantford (Mr. Raymond), who was elected on a platform which denounced us for reducing the duty on agricultural implements, was elected to reduce those duties still more? Does he think the hon. member for St. Antoine (Mr. Mitchell), who went before his constituents as a protectionist and who thus followed the example of his party leaders in the province of Quebec, the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George (Mr. Marler), who also followed the example of his party leaders, and who declares in this House that he had the solemn word of those leaders as his authority for that step—does the hon. gentleman mean to say that those members were elected to destroy the protective tariff?

Mr. HOEY: Hon. gentlemen always clap before they hear the full truth. If you deduct twelve members from the Liberal party, there is still an overwhelming majority in favour of the 1919 platform.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I would like the sixty-five, the whole membership from the province of Quebec, yes, and the Ontario membership to stand up and say—

Mr. CRERAR: Does that include the hon. member for Brome (Mr. McMaster)?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Oh, I think I had better exclude the hon. member for Brome. I congratulate the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar) on this one of the ninety and nine. Those who listened to the following masterpiece of tergiversation and evasion, I wonder what it was they voted for? These are the words of the present Prime Minister in describing his fidelity to the platform of 1919:

What mariner putting out into unknown seas would start out without a compass to show him in what direction to go, would plunge straight ahead into a rock if he saw it there, simply because there was some other chart that pointed that way at the moment.