

Now, what do these charges of extravagance amount to? Are they not frivolous and vexatious at a time when the Government is struggling, and struggling successfully, with the greatest crisis with which the public men of this country have ever been confronted? I ask my right hon. friend who occupies a conspicuous position in this House and in this Dominion and in the Empire this question: In view of the fact that he himself raised the British preferential rate, and in view of the facts that I have brought to his attention to-night as to the necessity for increasing the British preferential rate not only on grounds of revenue, but by reason of the necessity of adjustment, was he wise this afternoon in bringing forward his criticism of the Government, and endangering, to some extent, the public credit of Canada because of the weight that may attach to his words? My right hon. friend's words carry beyond the walls of this House; they carry across the sea. And I ask him, has he represented the situation fairly or has he represented it unfairly? With regard to the British preference, I think he has represented it unfairly. And if his words when they go across the sea have any adverse effect upon the credit of Canada, I ask him if that is co-operation in this crisis with which the Empire is confronted.

Laurier's Flippant Charges.

My right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) made a couple of serious charges against me this afternoon. He virtually charged me with false pretences. He said that under the colour of a war tax I had deliberately raised this tariff, not for the purpose of revenue, but for the purpose of assisting the privileged classes of Canada.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. WHITE: Hon. gentlemen say "hear, hear." That is to say that all I have stated here to-night is untrue. That is to say that, as Minister of Finance, I have not been sincerely desirous of raising by additional measures of taxation sufficient revenue for the purpose of meeting the increased expenditure due to this war, and maintaining the credit of this Dominion. Hon. gentlemen seem to participate in that charge made against me by the leader of the Opposition. In substance they say, or at least those of them who said "hear, hear" that under colour of this war tax it is my intention, not to raise additional revenue, but to assist the privileged classes of this country. Mr. Speaker, I shall not do myself the injustice of denying it. I have too much self-respect to deny a charge of that kind if it is pressed home. My right hon. friend has charged me virtually with false pretences, and he read an article from which I took one phrase because it was the gist of his attack upon me for increasing the British preferential rate. This was the phrase I took: "Suspect bad faith." That was in the article that was read by my right hon. friend this afternoon. That is that if bad faith is suspected it is not to be supposed that the Opposition will agree in the proposals of the Government. What was the innuendo, taking that remark, or utterance, in connection with the subsequent remarks of my right hon. friend? I desire to say this: My right hon. friend has introduced this amendment regarding the British preference condemning this Government for, as he states, placing extra barriers against Great Britain's trade with Canada at a moment when the mother land is under a war strain unparalleled in history.