

many demands made upon us for public expenditures. I frankly say that it is a good deal more difficult to economize than my hon. friends think.

Perhaps one of the strangest things in this discussion is that which was so forcibly referred to to-day by the Prime Minister, when he spoke of the criticism being offered that this was a protectionist budget. That is the strangest thing in the world, and if hon. gentlemen opposite will persist in that attitude, they must not be surprised that the country refuses to take them seriously. Why, in nineteen out of twenty cases in which the tariff is touched by these resolutions, it is touched by way of reduction, and in the budget of last year, with very rare exceptions every change that was made was by way of a reduction. Why then do hon. gentlemen persist in talking about this as a protectionist budget?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Was that not equally true of the budget of 1919 and the budget of 1920, both of which my hon. friend denounced as protectionist budgets?

Mr. FIELDING: My right hon. friend is not the best witness as to what I have said and things of times past; but I am more concerned in the things of to-day and of the future, than I am in what occurred in 1919. My taste for study does not lead me back to the kings of Egypt as quickly as it does in the case of my right hon. friend.

I would say, as regards the hon. member for West York, whose kindly criticism I accepted in the best of good nature, that he set himself right in the end. He did, perhaps, say some harsh things, but in the end he turned to the Speaker—I am not using quotation marks; I do not say that these were his words, but they are the substance of them—and he said: Mr. Speaker, I have been talking along these lines for some time; but I want to tell you that you do not want to take me seriously; I want you to understand that all this is said merely in a Pickwickian sense, and as evidence of that I want to tell you that these farmer chaps may, if they want to, go after the budget; let them; but as for me and my house, I am satisfied with the budget, and I do not propose to move any amendment. So, if I cannot agree with all that my hon. friend from West York has said at all events I can congratulate him upon the soundness of the conclusion which he has reached.

The Prime Minister dealt with the question of this being a protectionist budget, but I think what he said is capable of being emphasized. He said and very truly—indeed

he gave illustrations of the extent to which reductions had been made—that this could not be considered a protectionist budget. He dealt with the matter so ably that I will not dwell further upon it.

I turn now to make a brief reference to the speech of the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meighen). I am sorry that he did not find himself in a more amiable frame of mind. He does not seem to be able to forgive the people of Canada for a little event which occurred more than a year and a half ago. He should cultivate a little more amiability in that direction and leave his grouch at home next time. The first criticism was that this was not much of a budget anyway; that it did not give us as many statistics as it ought to; that there ought to have been this statement and that statement, and this comparison and that comparison. That is a fair matter of debate. Possibly he is right, but at all events he is not universally supposed to be right. A budget which would please everybody would be a marvellous thing. I have no thought that I have achieved that purpose, nor that I am ever likely to do so; but I am glad to be able to say this that, while in the press of the country I have found many criticisms, legitimate enough from the point of view of opponents of the government, I have been rather fortunate to have this compliment paid to me: "Whatever may be said, Fielding did not give us a long speech anyhow." That is something. You know the story in the case of the good old German people where the custom is to say something nice at the grave of the departed. This was the case of a man who had died and who did not have many friends. At his grave everybody was trying to say something nice and they found it a pretty hard job; but one old man said: "Well, friends, he was a good smoker." It is nice to have somebody say a kind word even in the matter of the brevity of the speech. I want to quote, particularly for the benefit of my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, what the leading Conservative organ of Canada said on the occasion of the delivery of the budget. I am quoting from the *Montreal Gazette* on the morning after the budget:

It (Mr. Fielding's speech) was the shortest budget speech on record and took less than an hour to deliver. The effort lost nothing on account of its brevity—

They differ from my right hon. friend there. He thinks it should have been a longer speech.

—and Mr. Fielding did not weary his listeners with a recital of endless figures on Canada's financial position. He gave a short, crisp statement in that regard and quickly got to the kernel of his subject, namely, changes in the tariff, sales tax and stamp tax.