

sions, as we believe, soundly and certainly sincerely, we are not able to accept the motion of the hon. member for Maple Creek.

Mr. ROBB: The minister has given a fair reason why the Government will not accept this amendment. They want greater protection to keep these ploughs from coming into the country, and this policy is perfectly consistent with the whole policy of the party on trade questions ever since it came into office in 1911. As was pointed out last night, the Minister of Finance was elected to office in 1911 because he opposed more particularly reciprocity. I am not going to labour that question, but I will say that on four different occasions in this House when the Liberal party presented to the people of Canada through this Parliament their policy in favour of reciprocity the Minister of Finance opposed and voted against it, and on two different occasions he made a speech giving a very good reason, to his mind, for that action. He opposed free wheat because free wheat, along the lines of the United States tariff by which we were also bound to give free flour and semolina would, in his judgment, ruin the dairy industry of Eastern Canada. Having pronounced himself twice in this way, the Finance Minister in 1917 put through an Order in Council placing wheat upon the free list. We are not without evidence as to why that was done. We are not without the evidence of hon. gentlemen who are to-day supporters of Union Government. We have the statement in Hansard of the hon. gentleman who at that time represented Assiniboia and who is now a member of the upper House. That gentleman told us in this Chamber that the Acting Minister of Justice (Mr. Meighen) who was then Solicitor General had made a trip to the West. The supporters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier had intimated their objection to an extension of parliament and the Government discovered that they had to go before the people. The Solicitor General made a trip West, and in the opinion of Senator Turriff as expressed in this House and as reported in Hansard, the Solicitor General had there learned that they must give free wheat or not one Conservative member would be returned to parliament. So they put through a hasty Order in Council of 16th April, after the western farmer had parted with his crop and it was in the hands of the grain dealers and speculators. For that particular crop year, therefore, reciprocity in wheat was of no value whatever to the western farmer.

[Sir Thomas White.]

The Union Government was formed, nominations were all in sight, everything looked safe, there was no danger of the Government being defeated, they had captured the organizations of both parties, and on the 4th of December of that year they put through another Order in Council which practically nullified the Order in Council of April.

I submit that the reciprocity proposal in wheat has never been of any benefit to the West. The legislation put through in these tariff resolutions, 60-61, has no more hope of being useful to the West than had the Order in Council of April 1917. Why do I say that? The Government know very well that the wheat situation is controlled by food boards in the United States and Canada who will see to it that there is no exchange of wheat for the present any way, and that wheat will not go into the United States. Western provinces may pass resolutions and western members may go into private caucus and resolute against this Government, but the fact remains that the Government are in power and supported by the very men who have been calling for relief for all these years. To-day we have the spectacle of the Minister of Finance saying that he is not prepared to grant the simple concession asked for by the western men. He is perfectly right and consistent with his whole attitude since 1911, he is not in the House to legislate for anything that will help the western farmer.

Referring again to this wheat situation; if the Finance Minister says that the Government are sincere and that they intend that wheat shall go into the United States under the provisions of the United States tariff, then I submit to the minister that he must go farther. He is discriminating against, and attempting to ruin, one of the natural industries in western Canada. If there is one industry that is natural to that country it is the flour milling industry. If the Finance Minister is going to create conditions which will enable the United States miller to put flour into Canada free of duty, he must go a little farther and admit to this country free of duty flour mill machinery. He must go still farther and admit free of duty the belting that is used in the flour mill and the bags into which the flour is put before it is shipped. He has placed a duty of 2½ per cent on cotton and on jute cloth. He says that if you employ United States labour to mill flour from Canadian wheat, if you like, and pack it in bags in the United States, he will allow that cotton to come into Canada free.