

Now, these may not be questions immediately connected with the tariff, but they are questions which concern the welfare of this country, and I bring them up chiefly for the purpose of giving rise to further discussion of them. We have a national system of railways that is going to prove a success. We have a country that will recover itself, notwithstanding the setback it has experienced. While business may not at present be so good, there is a great future ahead of this country. We will get more immigrants; there will be a better settlement of our land, but most of all we must find a way of remedying the grievance of our Canadian West as well as of the Atlantic coast sections. These things are before us and they must be dealt with. The grievances do exist; my sympathy is largely with those who present them. I hope, therefore, that we shall soon have legislation with respect to banking, legislation in the direction of creating a system of credit for the benefit of farmers of the West, and that prosperity will once again come to our country and to all countries of the world. According to this morning's papers there does seem to be hanging over the world the cloud of another war, and we have to devise a fiscal policy for ourselves that will make us independent and able to get along without those nations who would throw the world again into war. Parliament can well afford to give more of its time to the discussion of these things, and to making Canada self-sufficient for her present and her future greatness.

Mr. A. B. HUDSON (South Winnipeg): Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with the members who have spoken in expressing respect and good will toward the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding). I do this notwithstanding the fact that I feel compelled to differ from him in respect to several of the proposals he has put forward.

The budget contains many matters of very great importance to the country, and I propose to discuss very briefly two or three of these. In the first place, the minister asks for authority to negotiate a reciprocal trade arrangement with the United States. With that proposal I am in full accord; I heartily commend it. I do not share the view which the right hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meighen) expressed, that it would find no favour in the country; on the contrary, I think it would find the greatest favour. It does not seem to have been received with entire approval at Washington, and I think that the hon. member for Brome (Mr. McMaster) was quite right in saying that it

[Mr. W. F. Maclean.]

would probably have received a much better reception had we had there a Canadian representative whose business it would be to encourage better relations between these two countries.

The budget provides for a reduction in the duty on sugar, which is all to the good. It provides for an increase in the British preference which is so slight as far as I can see that it will mean nothing to the consumer.

The most significant part of the budget, however, is the reference of the Minister of Finance to stability. A good deal has been said as to what was meant by stability by various members of the government and others. I think that the Minister of Finance is a master of language, and that we can best accept his own words as conveying what he really meant. He says at page 2649 of Hansard:

I think the country should be content to accept the tariff as it will now stand as one as fair and reasonable as can be prepared under all the circumstances, and business men should be able to carry on various enterprises without the fear of being soon disturbed by further changes.

I think that is absolutely clear. The minister of Finance regards the present fiscal policy as one which should be fixed. There may be incidental changes, but as a general policy that tariff should be fixed for the present at least, subject only to what may occur in connection with reciprocal trade relations with the United States. Now with that statement I entirely dissent. Apart altogether from the question of free trade or protection, or of a protective policy, I think the time has arrived now when there should be a review of our whole fiscal system, that we should look over the situation that exists in Canada, review what has happened during the last forty or fifty years, and then frame a policy which would be in the best interests of the country.

It was the hope of many in 1879, when the National Policy was adopted that Canada might be made largely a self-contained country, a place where we would produce and make nearly everything we required to use or consume. How far we have got in that direction it is not easy to say, but the trade returns of our imports, comparing 1879 with the last fiscal year, show that in 1879 we imported goods to the value of \$80,000,000, and in 1923 goods to the value of \$802,000,000, just ten times as much. In the meantime our population just about doubled, so put in another way we now import per capita goods to the amount of \$90 whereas forty years ago we imported goods to the value of only \$18 per capita. Since then there has been a