

door of the Finance Minister for protection for various infant industries in British Columbia, demanding from the Public Works department appropriations for my large district—and not only large, but growing. When you get a district with between 9,000 and 10,000 miles of waterfront and the people are active and progressive, the first thing they need is wharves, and wharves mean a large expenditure of public money. I can hardly come down here and ask for appropriations and tariff protection on the one hand, and then vote for the very opposite under these amendments. For that reason I feel justified in supporting the government. It is all too true, I am sorry to say, that I have not received anything like the measure of justice my district is entitled to. I say it with regret and reproach, and perhaps with the secret idea that the reason may be that too large concessions were being given to my friends to my left. Perhaps that is why British Columbia has had to go more or less hungry in these matters.

Let us glance for a moment into the future and see where the passage of this amendment would lead us. Suppose—what shall I call it?—this unnatural union—between the party of high tariff on the one hand and low tariff on the other, political inexperience on the one hand, and political subtlety on the other—suppose it produces a majority against the government to-night, what will be the result? We know that under constitutional law the government will have the right to appeal to the country. That will mean loss—loss of money, expense and loss from the derangement of business, and as an hon gentleman sitting on this side of the House said, "It does not agree with my personal arrangements either". But there are moments when we have to place the benefit of the country before your own particular desires. I feel that it is desirable here and now that the question should be settled, at least for two or three years to come, whether the minority in this House is going to dictate the tariff policy of this country. If it were any other party but the gentlemen to my left I might be inclined to say it was only a political gesture, that they do not intend this resolution to pass. But I know so well the character of the hon. member for Springfield who moved it, and many of the other gentlemen behind him, that I realize they are sincere. I say it with all sincerity myself, I believe they are sincere and absolutely prepared to take the consequences of their action, and therefore it is the more fitting, the more necessary, that we should have

[Mr. Neill.]

a show down to find out in this country just where we stand, at least for some years to come.

I admit that the amendment is modestly worded—that is to say it does not go the whole length to ask for free trade. I confess that it is different from what I think they had in mind; but when we come down to a question of this kind we have got to go beyond the present amendment, we have got to get down to the final analysis, and I think I am justified in saying that the fiscal policy of the Progressive party is one of absolute and unadulterated free trade. I do not think that can be gainsaid. You have only to look at the debates of last year to prove that. But you do not even need to do so—the speeches that have been made this evening bear me out when I say that in the final analysis the aim, the aspiration, the goal to which the Progressives are finally committed is free trade and absolute free trade. They have served notice on the government that if they wish to secure, or to have continued, the ever wavering and always uncertain support of the Progressive party, they must carry out the fiscal wishes not only of an extreme party but the fiscal wishes of the extreme members of that extreme party; and it is for the government and for the country to decide whether a party which, after all, numbers only 27 per cent of the total membership of this House is to dictate to the other 73 per cent. That is the question which presents itself to me in connection with this matter. If it was any other party I might use the term political "extortion" but I do not do so because I have too much respect for these gentlemen to my left. Many of them are men of my own kith and kin, we are of a common origin, and I share their views to a very large extent except on the question of the tariff. We have many views in common, and have learned our lessons in the bitter, grinding school of experience; that is why we have so much in common on almost every point of view with the exception of the tariff. Therefore I will not use the phrase "political extortion," but rather the milder term of "political extraction." But, Mr. Speaker, there are times when we weary even of the painless dentist.

Now I have spoken of the situation as it presents itself here to-day. A number of years ago—too many years ago I am afraid, at any rate a long time ago—in Australia in the state—it was before the period of the Commonwealth—of Victoria, of which Melbourne is the capital, there was an election where