

involve us in no international troubles. It is a very important bill so far as the interests of this country are concerned, and I might go further and state that in respect to the ultimate destiny of British Columbia hardly any more important bill could be introduced, and therefore I earnestly submit it for the favourable consideration of the government and of this House.

Motion agreed to, and bill read the first time.

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Consideration of the motion of Mr. Putnam for an Address to His Excellency the Governor General, in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session, and the proposed amendment thereto of Mr. Hoey, and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Shaw, resumed from Monday, February 5.

Mr. W. T. LUCAS (Victoria, Alta.): Mr. Speaker, in rising to make a few observations in this debate it is my wish first to join with those who have preceded me in complimenting the mover and the seconder of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. The manner in which those two gentlemen acquitted themselves reflected credit upon themselves and brought honour to this House and to the constituencies which they represent.

It is not my intention to take up the time of the House by making any extended remarks, but in view of the serious condition that prevails to-day throughout this whole vast Dominion, and believing as I do that we have responsible government in Canada, I feel it is our duty as representatives of the people to place the viewpoints of our various sections of the country before the government so that they may be fully seized of the true conditions and endeavour to meet them in framing their policies at this time.

In crossing over half a continent in proceeding to this capital city, I came in contact with a great many men from different parts of the country, and in every conversation that I entered into I was particularly struck with the serious note that was interjected in regard to present conditions in Canada. I am not a pessimist, but I believe we would have been a good deal better off in Canada if we had had a little more pessimism in our make-up, and if the persons known as "boosters" had been classified as undesirable and rejected at the gates of our Dominion. The true optimist, in my opinion, is the man who really sizes up the situation, who

does not underestimate his enemy, and who makes provision accordingly.

I would like to comment upon what might be termed the unfair criticism that has been levelled at hon. members in this corner of the House. The right hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meighen) referred to it in the opening remarks of his address, and reference was made on different occasions last year to the Progressives leaning on the government. While I am speaking only for myself, I believe I express the view of the majority of hon. members in this corner of the House when I say that the people having at the last election placed the reins of government in the hands of new men, this new and untried government should be given a fair chance. Those who believe in British fair play will not condemn anyone without a trial. Personally I am not supporting the government, nor am I opposing it if they bring down legislation in the interests of the country.

I did not want to introduce this subject, but reference has been made to the matter of our organization, and we have been criticized by the press and in this House from the point of view of our representing a class. I am sorry that the two old parties which up to recently had represented this country since confederation did not deal with national questions in a national way, and thus compelled one class of the people to organize in order to present their views before this House—indeed, in order to protect their very existence. I say without fear of contradiction that the agricultural viewpoint was never fairly placed before the House until the Progressives sat here in large numbers.

Since confederation we have had, as I have already suggested, two parties, one known as the high tariff and the other as the low tariff party. In my recollection there has never been an election in the course of which the political football of the tariff has not been hauled out and made the main issue before the people. We were told last year that the government, being new in office, could not at that time make sweeping reductions in the tariff, but that they had taken a step in the right direction, and we were given to understand that when another session came around a further similar step would be taken. I was greatly disappointed, therefore, to note that in the Speech from the Throne no mention whatever was made of the tariff. Irrespective of what party has been in power in the past, we have been governed by the same national policy that was promulgated in the early days of confederation. The