

the Dominion Council of Agriculture are, so many of them, farmers. Farmers hold these views because in Canada they have been hit so hard by the tariff that they have had to study economics, and the result of a study of economics would be precisely the same amongst the workmen of the country, amongst the women of the country and amongst those on both front benches in Parliament, if they had the same promptings to study that the farmers have had. They adopted these same views because they were hard hit by the tariff, and they studied economics.

But what is it that is wrong in a class entering politics? It is not only class and class consciousness, but when it becomes the epitome of class selfishness, that is the real evil, and that is the danger which will always arise when men do go into the public life of the country because they belong to a certain class. But the farmers of all men—and particularly the Western farmers—are certainly free from any charge of selfishness in so far as their policy goes, because the first thing they ask Parliament and the Government to do is to take off all duties on the things they produce, in order that the general consumers of Canada may have the benefit of wholesome and cheap food. That is not class selfishness, surely. It is a sample of unselfishness and patriotism that would soon solve the tariff question if certain other members of the community would follow the example of the farmers in that respect.

Let me make an appeal on this point, which I have made before, to the people who do not see their way to stand on their own feet industrially. Let me make an appeal to these gentlemen to use all their endeavours to grow into the same stalwart type of Canadians that stood in the trenches and asked for no protection and the farmers of the West who ask for no protection. I would respectfully invite men engaged in other forms of industry to consider whether they really would not like to belong to the first-rate type of Canadian manhood that you will find in these two other classes of Canadians.

Mr. BRIEN: Would you advocate taking the duty off raw leaf tobacco and early tomatoes coming into this country?

Mr. MICHAEL CLARK: I had thought that my opinion in regard to the tariff was so well known that no one would need to ask me about it again. As far as my opinion goes, I do not believe in tariffs at all. They are an iniquity, and the sooner we get rid of them the better. But there has been

a great deal of misrepresentation of our views in that respect, as these views have been presented by my hon. friend from Marquette (Mr. Crerar). I have been twelve years in this House, Mr. Speaker, under both the old parties, and I never was scared about free trade coming by return of post. I have seen duties go on but I have seen precious little of them coming off. If we do not make any faster progress along these lines in the years that lie ahead of us than we have done during the twelve years I have been in this House, it is going to require quite a considerable portion of eternity to bring about free trade in this country. In regard to the particular articles that are mentioned by my hon. friend (Mr. Brien), that is not a question which should be addressed to me, and it is not a question I can give my hon. friend a special answer upon. I have given him the answer as to my attitude on the tariff generally. In my speech in the Budget debate last year I told the House very fully, and I think with a fair degree of lucidity, exactly how the tariff should be handled, exactly how the tariff should be taken off, pointing out that I was only asking the Finance Minister of Canada to follow the excellent example of Sir Robert Peel in Great Britain and of President Wilson in the United States. President Wilson followed almost slavishly, when he came into office, the methods of Sir Robert Peel in dealing with the tariff in England.

When I asked this question I was going on to say that while I absolutely agree that class representation and class activity in politics would be a curse to the country, I am surprised that these protests should only come at this particular time when for perhaps the first time in the history of the country certain classes are showing a little class consciousness. One would have thought that there never had been any class legislation in this world before, nor any attempt at class legislation.

Hon. gentlemen hold up their hands in holy horror the moment the farmers begin to take hold of public platforms. Why, Mr. Speaker, the history of progressive reform has been a history of the fight of the common people against class domination on both sides of the Atlantic. What was the Family Compact? Was it not a pretty narrow class in its day? What was the House of Lords in Britain but a class occupying the second chamber of that country, and using their position in it continually to look after their own interests. Has there been no class legislation in Canada at later periods than the Family Compact?