

than that, Mr. Speaker. We have had the most absolute evidence from my hon. friend from Prince Edward Island (Mr. Jos. Read) that this is the state of mind of the Opposition upon the subject. My hon. friend without contradiction on the other side of the House, said expressly in his remarks upon the Address that they on the other side did not wish to have a change of Government at the present time. They did not wish to have a general election at present, he said, because it would be folly to have an election—which, of course, might result in a change of Government—until the return of the soldiers. In view of that statement, to which no exception was taken by any hon. gentleman opposite, and which, I take it, expressed the opinion of the Opposition, I do not think I am going too far when I say that this resolution is not seriously proposed to the House as one which it is hoped will succeed. That is the first ground upon which, as a man with sincere views upon the tariff question—which views I have never altered and never will—I cannot vote for this resolution.

Now I want to say, in the second place, that I shall not vote for it because there are only certain possibilities in regard to the handling of a tariff. It is a very sweeping resolution, and I thoroughly endorse what has been said by my hon. friend (Sir Thomas White) who leads this House about the impropriety of introducing a sweeping resolution, which ought to be an amendment to the Budget, weeks, and possibly months, before the Budget can be introduced. Why, it is a perfectly elementary fact, in connection with parliamentary practice and governmental procedure, that if the attitude of a government upon customs duties were to be avowed before the Budget is presented, it would inevitably lead to commercial transactions in the way of avoiding these very duties after they were imposed by the Budget. That alone, ought to have guarded my hon. friends opposite from bringing in this resolution at this time; and I shall be very pleased indeed to hear how any one who speaks upon this subject will meet that point. If the Government were to accept the amendment of the Opposition, weeks before the changes advocated by the amendment could possibly be given effect to in the Budget, the result would be to defeat the Government in the very objects it had in making changes in the tariff, because commercial transactions would take place beforehand which would save the merchants of this country from the effect of the tariff, whether

[M. M. Clark.]

it was heightened or whether it was lowered.

My hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, with a good deal of vehemence of manner which showed he was not very sure himself whether he was on safe ground, appealed to his record on this matter, and the record of those with whom, in former years, he and I were associated. Well, there are records which might have guided my hon. friend and his associates at the present moment in regard to the sweeping nature of the resolution to which I have just referred.

It is interesting to recall how tariffs were handled when they were abolished in the Old Country, and it is important historically to be well acquainted with what is possible in the way of handling tariffs at any given point, having regard to the very principle which my hon. friend from Brome (Mr. McMaster) laid down himself—that these changes should be undertaken without unduly disturbing existing conditions. Every one who knows the tariff history of the Old Country knows that Sir Robert Peel made comparatively trifling changes in the tariff, in the year 1842, on manufactured goods in Britain, and in the same year he introduced an income tax. Well, when my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition is working himself into a state of excitement upon the state of the country, and the need of doing something, he should recall that at least fifty per cent of the policy carried out by Sir Robert Peel in 1842, in moving towards freer trade in England, has been carried out in its entirety by my hon. friend the leader of the Government, for he has followed exactly in the footsteps of Sir Robert Peel in introducing an income tax in this country, something which did not find its place upon the record of my hon. friends opposite, to which he has made such confident appeal. The changes of 1842 were followed by the repeal of the Corn Laws in the year 1846. In three successive Budgets after 1846, going on to the year 1861, Mr. Gladstone swept off in stages almost all the protective duties of the Old Country, ending with the abolition of the paper duty in the year 1861. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to reflect that from the year 1846 to the year 1861 is included a period of fifteen years. That fifteen years period is the span of the period during which hon. gentlemen opposite held power in this country—power achieved by the profession of Free Trade—and it is not only interesting to make this reflection but to draw a comparison between how real