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## Tariff Revision

"IT is a serious matter to be married," I said a wise old lady to her pretty granddaughter. "Yes, Granny," replied the miss, "but is it not more serious not to be?" It would be a serious matter for the Government to undertake a general revision of the customs tariff in the very few weeks that remain before the meeting of the session of Parliament. The task is much too large and important to be dealt with in a hurried way. But it may be a more serious matter for the Government not to undertake it. The Government, unfortunately for them, came under bond to have such a revision at the next session and there will be a disposition in influential quarters to demand the fulfilment of the bond.

At the last regular session of Parliament a large section of the Government's supporters, particularly those representing Western constituencies, pressed for tariff reductions. The Government compromised by making a few reductions and promising a general revision at the next session, to be preceded by an inquiry to be conducted—as in the time of the Liberal Government—by a committee of Ministers visiting all sections of the Dominion. This policy was announced in pretty definite terms by the then Minister of Finance, Sir Thomas White. Evidently it was declared very emphatically by the Minister in his intercourse with his supporters. Some of the Western men who accepted the compromise were called sharply to account when they returned to their constituents. In defence they said that they had only assented to the Government's policy upon a definite promise of inquiry during the recess and a general revision at the next session.

Sir Thomas White resigned soon after the close of the session. Sir Henry Drayton, who succeeded him, found the need of money so urgent that he had to devote himself largely to the work of placing the new Victory Loan. Another session of Parliament is but a few weeks away. The promised inquiry by committee of the Cabinet has not taken place. Now the announcement is made that there will be no such inquiry at present, that tariff revision is not to be expected at the coming session, and that the only thing contemplated is the collection of information from people interested, who are invited to send their views in writing to the Minister of Finance.

Under all the circumstances delay of a general tariff revision seems now to be unavoidable. But there will be large sections of the people and many representatives in Parliament who will find in the situation additional cause for the discontent which is being manifested in relation to public affairs in so many quarters.

## Politics At Ottawa

THE authoritative announcement that Sir Robert Borden will retire from the Government before the next session of Parliament will be a surprise to many people, but not to those who have had opportunities for the study of the political situation at close quarters. The duties of the Premiership are at all times onerous and likely to make exacting demands on a man of even the most robust constitution. That Sir Robert has suffered in health and that his physicians deem his retirement from active work necessary will be learned with the deepest regret by all classes. It must be admitted that in the troubled field of political life today there is little to tempt men to assume responsibilities, and much to lead them to escape from them when they can do so. The problems of government, at all times difficult enough, are more than usually hard today, because of the fever of discontent that has come so widely as the aftermath of the war. It is often said that the burdens of government were unusually great during the war. There is a measure of truth in this, but not so much as is sometimes spoken of. If new responsibilities came, a new spirit came with them. The great mass of our people were heart and soul with every movement that seemed necessary or useful for the carrying on of the war. The spirit of Parliament and of the people outran even the large demand made on their resources, and thus the work of government became comparatively easy. It is not so easy today. A time has come when the war spirit no longer overwhelms other things. The day of accounting has come. Here, as elsewhere, there has arisen a spirit of unrest, of discontent, a disposition to expect from all governments much more than they can do.

The Unionist Government at Ottawa was easily held together while the war was on. Men who differed widely on important public questions were able to put aside their dif-