

what can be done. I raise this point to settle it now, when parties are all at peace, during the time of the European war. In a year or two from the present time, when party strife is resumed again, an important issue may come up in this House, the decision of which may depend on one or two votes. There are a few senators under this ban of absence for two sessions. Then the question will be raised whether they should be allowed to vote. I want to avoid that condition of things. The Leader of the Government will join with me, I am sure, in saying that the matter is one worthy of consideration in view of results that may happen, and in view of the fact that senators are absent to-day, not of their own accord, but by reason of ill-health.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—As the hon. gentleman has already intimated, the matter is entirely covered by the British North America Act; consequently, it is a subject about which we have nothing to say. I know of no reason why a distinction should be drawn between this session and any other session, so far as it has a bearing on the question my hon. friend has raised.

CUSTOMS TARIFF ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD READINGS.

A message was received from the House of Commons with Bill 9, An Act to amend the Customs Tariff Act, 1907.

The Bill was read the first time.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED moved the second reading of the Bill. He said: It is a regrettable fact that this Bill was not even printed when it was introduced in the House of Commons and dealt with there. They dealt entirely with the subject as the schedules appear on the votes and proceedings of Friday last in the House of Commons. I understand those details have been distributed. On page 23 of the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons hon. gentlemen will find the schedules set out, and also in the debates of the House of Commons of Thursday last, page 30. I regret under the circumstances, therefore, that we have not the Bill printed, but all the information will be obtained from the Votes and Proceedings. The increased duty affects chiefly four particular articles, namely, coffee, sugar, spirits, cigars, and also the changes which necessarily take place in the excise tariff respecting those same articles. Approximately, it is thought

that the tax on coffee will realize the sum of \$500,000. The additional duty on sugar will realize five million dollars; upon spirits two and one-half million; upon cigars and cigarettes, two hundred thousand, and the excise duty on those same articles will realize \$6,600,000, in all about \$14,800,000. So that it is thought that approximately during the seven months we may rely upon an increase in duty exceeding \$7,000,000, which will be applicable to the deficit which we shall be called upon to meet.

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK—The question is one that is entirely in the hands of the Government. They are responsible for adopting the measure they consider best in the interests of the country to meet the extraordinary circumstances of the present situation. I do not altogether approve of the way in which the Government propose to meet the necessities of the country, but it is for them to devise the measure to meet the emergency. The condition of the country to-day is very serious. The declaration of war has upset the trade and financial interests of the country in a way that is without precedent in this Dominion. Practically I may say the whole world is in a condition which probably has never existed up to the present time. We have already seen the cost of living increased, and I understand that the Government has taken steps to see that the prices of food are not necessarily raised. What the Government have done in this case will no doubt affect food prices throughout this country. One of the principal measures we should adopt in order to help the situation is to increase the food supply to as great an extent as possible. I hope the Government will do everything they can to increase the food supply of the Dominion. For many years we have been opening up this country, and developing it by improving transportation facilities in the interests of the whole country, but unfortunately the conditions that have arisen mean that immigration into this country will be very much curtailed. Not only that, but in order to do our share in helping in the defence of this country and of the empire, a large number of our people will probably be drawn away from the very necessary work of producing food. We have therefore to consider what is the best way to arrange for as large an increase as possible in the food supply of this country. The condition of things prevailing to-day also affect very materially a large number of the manufacturing interests of this