

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES**. I was not in the House, and I have not heard of it before.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

### After Recess.

**Mr. FOSTER.** There are some things, Mr. Speaker, that would help one to the conclusion that the Government is not ready with the tariff, but we are loath to think that a party which, for the last eighteen years, has been on every occasion declaring its fixed principles as to the basis which should underlie tariff revision, which has not only done that outside of the House but has formulated in the House, time and time again, resolutions embodying its views, and which has been in power now for nine months, during which it ought to have been able to have had a tariff ready, if not at the last session, certainly at the beginning of this session—I say that one is loath to conclude that a Government and a party, in these conditions, does not bring down its tariff because that tariff is not ready. If the tariff is not down because of the unreadiness of the members of the Government who have it particularly in hand, there is only one other reason for the delay, and that is because the Government is unwilling to bring it down at this particular time. When the whole country is crying out for relief from its uncertainty and doubt, when the Government have it within their power to solve that doubt and uncertainty, when it is their first duty, as their own chief organ has declared over and over again, to relieve this uncertainty and anxiety at the earliest moment of the session—I say when the Government, under these conditions, are unwilling to bring down their tariff, there must be some vital reason for this unwillingness. It cannot be founded upon any reason, so far as the tariff of the United States is concerned. Taking into consideration the party utterances and the great party victory in that country last autumn, taking into consideration the action of the Ways and Means Committee, taking into account as well the fact that that Ways and Means Committee performed its labours almost unanimously and presented the result of its labours to Congress, and that the House of Representatives, in less than fifteen days, adopted the representations of the Tariff Committee, and sent them to the Senate, where the dominant party has a majority at its control, there can be no reason at all, based upon the constitutional conditions in the United States, why our Government should be unwilling to bring down their tariff. Nor can they base their unwillingness on the ground that the business interests are not waiting and longing for the tariff. The only reasons that I can see why the Government are unwilling to bring down

their tariff are certain party and petty reasons which will exist until certain provincial elections are decided, until which time, for reasons best known to themselves, they are unwilling that their tariff measure should see the light of day.

I doubt if ever, in the history of Canada, or in the history of any constitutionally governed country under the constitution of Great Britain, there has ever been seen what we are witnessing at present. Outside of a declaration of the general principle which underlies the revision of the tariff, whether it be the principle of protection or the principle of free trade or the principle of a tariff for revenue alone—outside of the declarations of the principle, in a general way, which serve to guide the public mind and the business interests of the country, it has been the law, up to this time unbroken, that no Finance Minister and no Government should give any intimation to any of the different interests which would be affected by the tariff as to what would be the policy of the Government when the tariff was brought down, with reference to that particular industry. That has not only been the rule of this Dominion Parliament and of the Government of Canada, but it has been a salutary rule, and the moment that you break away from that rule, the moment you single out any one interest—

**Mr. SPEAKER.** I think the hon. gentleman should really state how that affects the question under discussion. The hon. member knows the form of the resolution which he is to propose, and as he is certainly apparently bringing us very far afield from the object of this discussion, I think he should explain the point of his resolution, so that we may see whether his remarks apply to it or not.

**Mr. MCGREGOR.** He should not say the same thing over twenty times.

**Mr. FOSTER.** It is necessary sometimes to repeat—

The **POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. Mulock). Order, reply to the Speaker's ruling.

**Mr. FOSTER.** Having answered my hon. friend from Essex (Mr. McGregor), let me say, in reply to Mr. Speaker, that I am not making my speech from the standpoint of one who has not thought it out and does not know exactly the trend of it. I am not speaking against time, but making an argument which, I believe, is fair and pertinent, and I have no hesitation in saying that when my resolution is before the House, every point I have made will be found to hinge directly upon that resolution.

**Mr. SPEAKER.** I must accept the hon. gentleman's statement.