

suspended; individual sacrifices had to be appealed to, in order to achieve victory and bring to a triumphant conclusion the cause supported by the Allies. These hon. gentlemen that sit on the Treasury benches maintained that, in order to have a free hand and plenty elbow room, all the existing laws had of necessity to be suspended and the Parliament of this country had to give up its prerogatives, so as to hand over to ministers sitting in the Unionist cabinet the full control of public affairs.

Aware as we are that, in order to build up that Unionist party and that Union government, all men of good will had to be appealed to; when we call to mind that sincere Liberals, for the time being, severed connection with and cut loose from their party to join hand in hand with men they had hitherto opposed, it is most regrettable to find that the acting Prime Minister of this country has deemed it fit to slap them in the face, as he did yesterday. How so, Sir? The Acting Prime Minister told us that in 1917, not only was the Unionist party elected on the platform of prosecution of the war, but that the new allies had agreed on a political programme, and that the election of 1917 was won not only to carry the war to a victorious conclusion, but on a well-defined political programme. Is there a single individual, out of this House, who is going to believe—for in this House under our rules, one is bound to accept the statements made by an hon. member from his seat, and so far as I am concerned, I am bound, so long as I sit here, to believe that the Acting Prime Minister did really make a statement borne out by the facts—but let me ask the hon. members who sit within these precincts whether there is a single individual, outside this House, when not bound by the rules of the House, who would believe that my hon. friend, the member for Shelburne and Queen's (Mr. W. S. Fielding), a former Prime Minister of his province, one of the outstanding figures of the Liberal party, a minister of Finance for fifteen years, who has waged war on the protection tariff so dear to the hearts of these gentlemen, who is the man, I say, who is going to believe that the hon. member for Shelburne and Queen's did really come to an understanding with the Acting Prime Minister on a well defined political programme previous to the election? Had such an understanding been reached, how happens it that my hon. friend from Shelburne and Queen's severed his connection with and cut loose from the Unionist party, and returned to the

[Mr. Gauthier.]

party fold, sitting now in the ranks of the Liberal Opposition?

In the reference to the words fallen from the lips of the Acting Prime Minister, and directed to those colleagues of his who supported him in times of stress, it strikes me that it was paying them a very poor compliment to say that they proved false to and have gone back on the pledges given prior to the election of 1917. By no means, Sir. Who is going to believe that the hon. member from Red Deer (Mr. Clark) did really forswear his allegiance to free trade, in order to adhere and subscribe to a pre-arranged political platform of the hon. gentlemen? Who is going to be fooled into believing that the former Minister of Agriculture who is now sitting alongside the representatives of the United Farmers, and old Liberals, old oppositionists to the present Government, had joined the Union government with a well defined political programme?

Oh no! these gentlemen may well try to throw dust in the eyes of the people, they may well try to belittle the grandeur of those who, in a moment of distress, believed in the sincerity of the scattered remnants of the Tory party, believed at a time that really their help was necessary to enroll the live forces of the nation, to enlist our youth and send 500,000 of our sons to the battlefields of Europe, while draining the wealth of the country; of such men as the hon. member for Shelburne and Queen's, as the hon. member for Red Deer, as my hon. friend the member for Halifax (Mr. A. K. Maclean) who, in a manner to which I will later call attention, has just left the government which he had joined. These men had believed that their help was necessary, and because they believed that their help was necessary I bow to them for the course they took; I recognize that they obeyed the dictates of their conscience. But, after having accomplished the work for which they had abandoned their party, when they think proper to come back to that party, it seems to me that they deserve other treatment at the hands of those whom they have helped to retain power, that they deserve other treatment than to be told that when they entered the Government there was a perfectly definite political programme which they deserted before its realization.

I am bound to believe that there was a programme, but I doubt very much whether the public will give much credence to this statement of the Acting Prime Minister.

It is said that there exists a general uneasiness in the country. To this the