

THE TARIFF GENERALLY.

I have submitted to the House all that the government have to propose on this great question. We quite realize the difficulties connected with tariff changes ; we quite realize the difficulties which business men experience in regard to the tariff ; and while we have been willing to consider all reasonable requests, while we have been anxious to meet the legitimate demands for changes, we have always had a strong opinion that there was a great deal of merit in a policy of tariff stability. I have met many manufacturers who, while they wanted some particular change, frankly said that rather than go into any broad changes in the tariff policy, they would submit to what they considered a disadvantage for a little while longer, because they recognized that frequent tariff changes are not desired by business men.

A great deal of merit in a policy of tariff stability.

Our tariff has been in operation since 1897 with a very few changes. It would not be surprising if changed conditions should necessitate changes in the details of this tariff. We believe that in what we have proposed to-day we have met the most urgent matters which have been presented to us. We believe we have met to a large extent the complaints which have been made by our manufacturers by the introduction of this policy in regard to dumping or slaughtering.

Changed conditions necessitate changes in details.

We believe that in the form in which the tariff will stand when these amendments have been adopted, as I trust they will be by parliament, the tariff will be in a condition which will give general satisfaction to nearly all classes in this country. But as respects the items with which we have not dealt, we do not for a moment assume that the tariff is perfect. We admit that in a number of instances circumstances may have arisen under which, after proper investigation, it may be necessary to make further changes.

Present tariff will give satisfaction to nearly all classes in the country.

We are prepared as I have said to make a careful inquiry into all these things, such a careful inquiry as every business man must desire should be made before such policy is introduced into this House. But, I think we are justified in saying that in the main, we have, by introducing and devising tariff measures to meet the conditions of the country, given a reasonable assurance to the country now and in the future that this government

Prepared to make careful inquiry.