

struggle for liberty became so intense and absorbing that the people of Canada were constrained to turn their attention away from the ordinary course of affairs, and one supreme issue occupied the thoughts and the attention of the electorate of the Dominion—that was the winning of the war. When that time came, I felt it my duty, as a supporter of those who were prosecuting the war successfully, to place that fact in a pre-eminent position in connection with the attitude I would take in my public pronouncements and utterances. Consequently, as soon as the announcement was made that an appeal was to be made to the people on the winning of the war as the issue, I tendered my resignation to those who had been kind enough to offer me the nomination as an independent Liberal in the constituency of Macdonald. I went to the convention, as the representative from our locality, with my mind made up that whoever succeeded in securing the nomination on the win the war issue would have my entire support on that occasion. It transpired that I was selected as the representative of Macdonald. Under these circumstances, from that time until the present, the winning of the war and the cleaning up of the aftermath of the war have had the first place in my thought and in my activities. There came a time last autumn when a decision had to be reached on a very important question, touching the position I had taken and the policy I had marked out.

Our Grain Growers' convention was held in the city of Brandon, and at that convention there was a certain feeling among the members present that the time had come for action to be taken along the line of pledging the members of the Government in the province of Manitoba to a certain course with regard to the trade policy. A resolution was accordingly presented to the convention but when that was done I, as presiding officer, felt it my duty to make a statement to those present. The statement I made was that I believed the tendency of the resolution, if it were voted upon and carried, would be to divert the attention of the Government from the questions that were to my mind of paramount importance at that time, that I did not consider it would be wise to present that resolution to the convention, nor did I consider that it was an opportune time, if that resolution were presented and carried, to submit it to the members of Parliament and ask them to pledge themselves to a certain line of action. Furthermore, I

[Mr. Henders.]

said that until I had redeemed my pledge to the constituency of Macdonald, namely, to support the Government in the winning of the war, I did not feel disposed to entertain nor would I entertain for one moment, the signing of any pledge. The convention reconsidered the matter and endorsed my position, and the resolution was remodelled accordingly.

A good many of the members of this House will be able to bear me out when I say that since I became a member I have been very anxious along one particular line, namely, not to interfere with the winning of the war, and with the carrying out of all the arrangements necessary to take care of the aftermath of the war. But in connection with the taking care of these conditions, I felt that, perhaps, the time had come when the Government should declare themselves as to the fiscal policy that they intended to present to the people. Some hon. members will recollect that at the first meeting of the members of the Government party I took occasion to express myself very strongly along that line, and that I expected the Government would deal with the matter and place before the House some time during the session a clear cut policy in that regard. I was not without opinions with regard to what I considered to be a progressive and advanced, practical, commonsense fiscal policy for Canada. I might say that for years I have been an advocate of the freest possible trade relations between the different countries of the world. So long and earnestly have I entertained these opinions, that I was one of the members of the Canadian Council of Agriculture who in the early days found my way as a member of the first delegation that came to Ottawa to put the views of the West before the Government in power. The first delegation that came from the West, after we had decided on a plan to alleviate the conditions attendant upon those living out on the land in that new country, sought an amendment to the Grain Act, and also a change in our fiscal policy. This was composed of four men, of whom I was one. When the farmers' platform was prepared the Liberal Government was in power. Ten years ago, a delegation came from the West to place the platform of the farmers before that Government. I was a member of that delegation, and we sought to place before the Government what we believed to be a first-class fiscal policy for the Dominion at that time. The following year a large delegation came to Ottawa five hundred