

Mr. WHITE: And coal. Tariff stability—he cannot ride the two horses of reciprocity and tariff stability at the same time. My right hon. friend has criticised me, not very often, but on several occasions, with regard to what he has been pleased to call tariff tinkering. There never has been less of tariff tinkering done by any Government since Confederation. In my budget last year I was criticised by my hon. friend from Edmonton (Mr. Oliver), but so far as tariff stability is concerned I stand with my hon. friend, and I say that there is nothing more important to the industry of this country and to its general prosperity than maintaining general tariff stability until a general revision of the tariff. I agree absolutely with my hon. friend as to that. I said in my budget speech last year explicitly that there were some tariff items in respect of which much could be said in favour of an increase and others in respect of which much could be said in favour of a reduction, but that, having regard to the fact that we were to establish a Tariff Commission and to the general prosperity and conditions prevailing in Canada, I was of the opinion that no tariff modification should be made last year. I am on record as saying that. But now my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) does not seem to have the faculty of criticising himself. Does he not know that no possible change or revision of tariff once a year would produce any such condition of instability as the reciprocity agreement negotiated by his Government? I shall tell you why this is so. In the first place that agreement was terminable on short notice. Let me recall something historically interesting to my right hon. friend and to the members of this House. When the old Lord Elgin Reciprocity Treaty terminated in 1866 the Americans were not willing to renew it. It had lasted for 12 years, but terminated in 1866, after the war. The Americans were not willing to renew it for reasons with which many members will be familiar, among those reasons being a certain hostility on account of the war. The coalition government then in power in Canada, sent two commissioners, Messrs. Hay and Howland, for the purpose of negotiating an extension of that Treaty. They were not able to do that but they suggested that there should be an agreement come to precisely the same as was come to last year, to be brought into effect by reciprocal legislation, and the Hon. Geo. Brown, one of the leading Liberals of Canada, one of the stalwarts of the old days and the founder of the Toronto Globe which now talks of obstruction any day you may mention anything against reciprocity, the Hon. Geo. Brown threatened

Mr WHITE (Leeds)

ed to resign from the Government and did actually resign for that and another reason.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Hear, hear.

Mr. GRAHAM: Tell us the other reason.

Mr. WHITE (Leeds): But he is on record with regard to it. My right hon. friend will find that Hon. George Brown—and no man will have more respect than my right hon. friend for the Hon. George Brown for his judgment in many ways—said it would introduce an element of instability into the affairs of Canada, that we would be kept dangling on legislation at Washington and he could not under any circumstances have put it better than in that expression. We all know that the great trouble in the United States to-day is tariff instability. Tariff changes are threshed out in one House or in the other, they may be amended in one House or in the other, and people dare not make contracts any distance in advance. If there had been such an agreement as this, notice would be given frequently to terminate it, and that would introduce an element of instability. After our plant, our railways, &c., had all been arranged running north and south, after our trade had found new channels, we might have had notice given to terminate the agreement in a few months, to the disturbance of the country generally. That would introduce an instability that we cannot conceive of. Nothing that could be done in the way of altering our own tariff from year to year could produce such instability as would have been introduced into our affairs by such a reciprocity agreement.

What have we lost by the rejection of reciprocity? Let us consider this fairly, what have we lost by its rejection?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: You had better ask George Lane, exporter of cattle.

Mr. WHITE (Leeds): Mr. George Lane is no doubt a worthy citizen, but after all there are many worthy citizens, and it is the business of statesmen to secure the greatest good for the greatest number. I have never denied that reciprocity would have been of great advantage to many individuals, but what we have to consider is the greatest good for the greatest number from an economic standpoint. And I believe that by bringing into this House legislation giving effect to the reciprocal trade agreement negotiated by my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), with the government of the United States, we would not have been securing the greatest good for the greatest number.

My right hon. friend will remember that