

an interesting and exhaustive study of the tariff question and who maintain that it is the most important. I maintain that the question of decreased taxation, the question of expenditure and questions pertaining to transportation are of greater importance to this country than the tariff question.

I wish to consider the affairs of Canada along the lines of a strictly big business proposition, as I would consider the affairs of a private business, and to urge a decrease, if possible, in the burden of taxation and the adoption of policies that will be in the best interest of the country. I desire to be identified with policies that will work out to the benefit of the country, that will restore public confidence and that will, if possible, overcome some of the serious tales of woe that are continually being broadcasted throughout Canada. If, in any degree, confidence can be restored by some other means than by recognizing the tariff as the paramount issue, I believe it will assist in lessening our taxation burden.

I should like, for a moment, to explain my position in this House. My primary duty has been to labour and to the farmer. I was not elected under the auspices of and I do not owe a duty to any political organization, and this, perhaps, accounts for some of the positions I may be able to take and why I may be able to look at questions from a different angle. Not having a political organization to respond to, but having a primary duty to my supporters, especially to labour and to the farmers, I might be in a different position as regards some of the statements to which I shall refer.

Keeping in mind my first reason for taking part in this debate, I should like for a moment to refer to conditions in British Columbia. Yesterday evening, we listened to a very interesting address delivered by the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. McQuarrie). At the conclusion of his remarks, he, being a member for British Columbia, referred to the conditions in that province. Having the honour and privilege of representing a constituency in British Columbia, I cannot subscribe to all that he stated last night, and I should like to describe conditions as I find them to-day in my province and more especially in my constituency, keeping in mind the remarks that have been made by previous speakers, particularly the Minister of Public Works (Mr. King) and the hon. member for New Westminster. My statements that I have confidence in this country and that I am filled with a spirit of optimism, are, I believe, based on existing conditions in British

[Mr. Humphrey.]

Columbia. In my constituency business conditions have not been as good for many years. There is increased activity in mining and in practically every other industry in the province. It is only necessary for anyone to pick up a newspaper from British Columbia to find that these statements are, in the main, correct. This increased activity is prominent, not only in one part of British Columbia, but throughout the entire province.

I am not prepared to say just what is the reason for this period of prosperity, nor do I intend either to give credit to, or to criticize anyone in particular. I say simply that this condition now exists in British Columbia, and if the present government wishes to take any degree of credit in the circumstances I for one have no hesitation in according it. We are taking the conditions to-day as we find them in the province, and after listening to some of the remarks made by the hon. member for New Westminster last evening the House might be inclined to believe that the state of things in British Columbia was just the same as has been described by practically every hon. member to my right. That being the case, I desire in my own small way to give as briefly as possible the situation as I see it. The hon. member for New Westminster, in dealing with the questions affecting the province of British Columbia, referred to the Minister of Public Works (Mr. King, Kootenay) observing that he, like the Minister of Labour (Mr. Murdock), had tried to make conditions in that province appear rosy. I quote from the remarks of the hon. gentleman:

The Minister of Public Works told us that things were very prosperous, that conditions were good in British Columbia; and he referred particularly to the timber industry, to the fisheries, to the mines. . . .

Further on he said:

That is all right. I quite agree with the Minister of Public Works that things in British Columbia are, in some respects, getting better. But what has the government got to do with it?

Well, as I have already said, I am not here to defend the government; but I am here to give if possible as true an account of conditions in the province and in that connection to offer probably a word of criticism. The hon. member went on to say:

The government is not assisting the mining industry; it is not even building a smelter on the Pacific coast which is so badly required; in fact the government is not doing anything at all to assist the mining industry. I say that any prosperity that may have come to the mining industry is not due to anything this government has done.

I am not so much concerned about these statements, nor do I wish to criticize too harshly what the hon. member has seen fit to