

which all my work has been done. The position of the farmers of Western Canada on the question has, I think, been stated to the people of Canada very clearly and in an unmistakable manner. I have been associated, and am still proud to be associated, with the organized farmers. When I entered this Government some eighteen months ago, I did so from a profound sense of duty upon the most outstanding issue before the Canadian people at that time. I followed my conscience then on this question, and I shall do the same on other questions that may call for settlement. I do not disguise the fact that I have always believed in a low tariff policy for this country. I know that there are those in this House, and many in the country, who differ conscientiously from me; but I trust that we can still have differences of opinion on important questions of national policy that are of vital moment to the welfare of Canada, and discuss them purely and simply on their merits. That being my position in this important matter, let me say, Sir, that I think the hon. member for Brome (Mr. McMaster) has introduced his resolution at a rather inopportune moment; and I cannot help thinking that perhaps it has been introduced by the hon. gentleman as much for the benefit of some of the members on his own side of the House, as for the benefit of some others on this side. As the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. M. Clark) stated this afternoon, hon. gentlemen on the opposite side must know that this resolution cannot be accepted at the present time. What is the situation? If the amendment to the motion were accepted, it would mean the overthrow of the Government and a general election, with all the necessary turmoil that would ensue.

Mr. McKENZIE: Not by reason of the acceptance of it.

Mr. CRERAR: Yes, that is what it would mean. It could mean nothing else.

Mr. McKENZIE: The hon. minister states that if the resolution were accepted it would mean a general election. It would not, Mr. Speaker; it would not mean a division at all, and the Government certainly could not be defeated.

Mr. CRERAR: The Acting Prime Minister, this afternoon, made the position quite clear as to what the real significance of the resolution is, and there is no difference of opinion, on this side of the House at any rate, as to what is involved. I say that it would mean the plunging of this country into a general election, and that

is not desirable at this stage. It is wholly undesirable for several reasons, which I do not need to enumerate. I propose to vote against this resolution because it should not have been introduced at the present time. If the hon. gentleman wishes to press the principles contained in it, the proper time to do so is when the Budget has been brought down and when we are considering the future fiscal policy of the country.

Mr. McMASTER: If I withdraw this motion will the Minister of Agriculture pledge himself to vote for a similar resolution later?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. CRERAR: The hon. gentleman is very ingenious; at any rate he thinks he is. As far as my position is concerned, I am quite willing to leave it until the Budget is under discussion. The fiscal policy of the Government will be disclosed when that Budget is brought down, and that will be the proper time, in my judgment, to discuss the question which the hon. gentleman has raised this afternoon. Nevertheless, this question is an important one. There is no disguising the fact that in Western Canada there is a very strong feeling that substantial reduction of the tariff should be made, and I think I may say that there are good arguments to support that contention. I do not desire to twit hon. gentlemen opposite with their past record on the fiscal policy. I think I can say, however, that they will have to go a long way before they convince the farmers of Western Canada that they are absolutely sincere in the position they take. If I understand the temper of the Western farmers—and I mention this because free allusion has been made to it this afternoon—he is looking with a very critical eye indeed upon this whole matter. I frankly say that I do not think that a resolution such as the hon. member for Brome has introduced this afternoon—introduced for no other purpose than I can conceive of than to embarrass the Government in carrying on the business of the country at the present time—will find very much favour with the Western farmers at this moment. If the hon. gentleman had introduced the resolution later in the session, and if he had been able to convince the people of Canada as to his bona fides—I do not question that for a moment, because I think the hon. gentleman is entirely sincere—he might have had a better chance of carrying conviction to their minds. Whatever