

the present treaty an obvious disability which applies to one and a not unimportant section of this country. To that end I propose to address my remarks.

It has been stated with apparent truth that in taking the position we do we are acting in a manner inconsistent with former protestations made in the house and the policies which have always been believed in, always been advocated by the organization which nominated us and which was instrumental in sending us here. But I think that objection is founded upon two misapprehensions. The first is this as to the attitude of the farmer, the western farmer included, towards tariff and protection. I have heard in the house during the last few days a great deal of loose talk concerning the attitude of the farmer towards protection. I have heard it stated on the one side that he is unequivocally opposed to protection of any kind. I have heard it stated on the other that he is himself rapidly becoming a protectionist. I have heard it stated that no form of protection on any class of farm goods can at any time or under any circumstances be of advantage to him. If such were the case, naturally no objection could be taken to the discrimination displayed in this treaty.

To my mind we have to analyse the situation a good deal more closely than that. The farmers' organization to which I belong, the farmers throughout western Canada, so far as I know, have taken and do take ground, which I have taken and still hold, that as regards the system of protection as a whole the disadvantages accruing to agriculture very greatly overbalance any possible advantage that might be derived from that system. I also take the ground, which I think is borne out by the obvious facts, that a tariff placed against the entry of farm products, when farm products of a similar nature in this country are upon a definitely export basis, such as wheat, for example, can be of very little value to any Canadian farmer. But I have never heard it successfully argued that a tariff placed against the entry of farm goods the production of which in this country is not upon an export basis, but is wholly consumed in Canada, can have any other effect than that of advantage to the Canadian farmer. That is why I say that we must analyse the situation, take each particular phase of it by itself and consider it on its merits. In that way we are neither compromising nor departing from our belief that, taking the protective system as a whole, its disadvantages are greatly in excess of its advantages so far as the farmers of this country are concerned. We are not departing from our formerly expressed opinions when we state that no tariff placed

upon farm goods when farm goods of a similar nature in this country are on an export basis, can be of any value, but we state—and as I say I think it is borne out by the facts—that a protective tariff upon farm goods that are not upon an export basis, that are not produced in such sufficient quantities as to meet the full requirements of the home market, must of necessity be of advantage to the Canadian farmer. That is the position taken in regard to protection by the farmers of this country. I am not saying at this moment that because of that fact the farmers either should ask or are justified in asking for that protection. But we should analyse the situation and confine ourselves to actual facts when defining protection as it affects the farmer.

I have been a member of the farmers' organization in Alberta for well over twenty years, ever since its inception, and I presume I can speak as well as any other man for the principles of that organization and for the motives which led to its formation. I have one definite fact in mind, a fact which formed the basis of all our arguments when our organization was first constituted, a fact which is as dominant and true to-day as it was then, namely, that the great impelling motive which drew the farmers of the west together in this organization was that they found in the laws, the fiscal policy of this country, the farmers were not placed on a basis of equality as compared with those engaged in other industries. They resented that and they banded themselves together in order that they, together, could accomplish what they could not achieve singly, namely, place themselves on that basis of equality as regards fiscal policies, commercial business, financial position and legislative influence. That was why they came together and for that purpose they were organized.

If we bear that in mind, in what position do we find ourselves to-day in relation to the Australian treaty? Can any hon. gentleman, no matter how he may support this treaty, no matter how beneficial he may find it in respect of Canada as a whole—and I admit at once I am glad to say it is beneficial to Canada as a whole—say that in its very basis, its very terms, its very nature, the treaty is not an application of unequal policies as regards farming and other industries in this country. In its very terms, its very basis, it violates the policy of equality for which we banded ourselves together and sets up the very policy of inequality which we were determined to eradicate. I can see no inconsistency in our position in that regard.

We find ourselves faced with a new set of conditions. Everyone in this country knows,