

more by the law of supply and demand. If there ever was any virtue in the old free trade doctrines of the Liberal party, then surely today that party is the farthest away from its free trade policy it has ever been since confederation. If there ever was any virtue in it, then surely there might be some virtue in it today, when the whole world is clamouring for foodstuffs. This is a time when we need international trade, and when we should not allow ourselves to get into a position where we have to prohibit goods from that great customer, the United States of America.

We can well recall hearing the present Prime Minister state in the house that we must not provoke the United States. We could scarcely raise a tariff. But today we have the greatest number of changes, and have observed the greatest number of changes in the fiscal policy of the Liberal party that we have seen in the last twenty-five years.

I can remember when that party was going to have a policy of free trade. They said, "Buy your implements where you can buy them the cheapest; sell your products where you can sell them for the most"—total free trade. The Liberal party in western Canada called for free trade.

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): That was a time when you could exchange money; but today you cannot do that.

Mr. ROWE: And Liberals, like my hon. friend from the province of Quebec, wanted reasonable protection for that province, and the city of Montreal, as many of us did for the industrial sections of Ontario. But the result was that in 1930 the fiscal policy of that party which has been everlasting in its condemnation of any degree of protection was such that a minister of finance, who preceded the one now in office, came in with countervailing duties. He chided us on this side of the house for having a brick-for-brick policy. He said, "We will not call it brick for brick; we will count it a countervailing tariff. If the United States puts on a tariff of ten per cent, we will put on the same tariff here". In other words, we have changed so often in Ottawa that we now leave it to Washington to decide what type of tariff we shall have. It is now said that in order to get more United States dollars and prohibit the importation of United States goods we shall put on a 25 per cent excise tax; we shall provide a long list of goods which will not be allowed into Canada.

I do not intend to go into any legal argument as to the unconstitutional part of it, because I have mentioned before what I

thought of it. This is the first time in my experience of a quarter of a century in this house that I have known of taxes to be imposed over the radio and have them collected long before they were passed by parliament. I listened to the hon. member for Halton and, being a farmer, I imagine it was difficult for me to follow him. However, as a farmer I could tell that, while he was trying to give a legal interpretation, it was simply a skilful legal circumvention of the real issue when he was saying that the minister was not in any way bound or was not acting unconstitutionally when he asked parliament for certain rights. Even the minister laughed at that and I am sure that would not need much argument. The people of this country know that this is another example of the usurpation of parliamentary rights such as we have not before experienced in the life of this house, all under the cloak of emergency of war, a war which ended two or three years ago. You will always have emergencies when there is this uncertainty in our fiscal policy which we have experienced in the last few years, especially of late years. The more emergencies we have, the greater the tangle will be.

I am not going to labour it any more than to say I regret that the government now finds itself in an economic tangle. Nobody is just sure how they got into it, and heaven knows nobody knows how they will get out of it.

Mr. ABBOTT: They explained how they got into it a few minutes ago.

Mr. ROWE: I urge upon those who have the great responsibility of fixing the fiscal policies of this country, such as the Minister of Finance or the minister who has control of our rapidly growing industrial expansion; I urge them when they are thinking over these fiscal matters to ask themselves whether they can get more production by putting on more taxes or whether they can get more industry by having more governmental controls. I urge them to ask themselves that in the quiet confines of the east block.

Mr. THATCHER: Can the minister tell us how much has actually been collected in the almost four months this tax has been on?

Mr. ABBOTT: I could not give those figures because the returns from the outports do not segregate them. It is possible, of course, they might be obtained.

Mr. THATCHER: Could you obtain them?

Mr. ABBOTT: I shall see if they can be obtained.

Mr. KNOWLES: You admit that the tax has been on for four months?