

grievous one. But the country moves. I have never pretended, nor has any one on this side of the House pretended that the tariff made in 1897, and which has been in force ever since, should be like the laws of the Medes and Persians and never changed. On the contrary, we are Liberals, we are Reformers, and we believe in moving forward with the times. The tariff made in 1897 has been its own justification. The proof of the pudding is the eating, and never did the people of Canada have such a pudding on their table as that placed before them by my hon. friend the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) in the tariff of 1897. But the people of the west are now asking for a reduction of duty on certain articles which they consume. That is a very proper subject of investigation, and we intend to investigate it: But at the proper time. My hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) is very impatient. We who have been in office for a certain number of years know that if there is one thing more than another essential to the business prosperity of a country it is stability of character. And my hon. friend from North Toronto (Mr. Foster) who has special charge of these matters on his side of the House will not dispute this although when in office, he was delinquent on this point—he tinkered with the tariff year after year. But with the warning before us given by his course, we were particularly careful not to fall into his error. It has been our policy to have a revision of the tariff periodically, but not year after year. I stated to the people of the northwest during my recent trip that it would be our duty to consider their requests and to deal with them in the spirit in which we have always dealt with requests from the people. And I repeat that now. I stated, and my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) quoted my words, that we would have a commission of investigation before we undertook a revision of the tariff. I noticed that that evoked a cheer on the part of hon. members on the other side of the House. And may I be permitted to say without offending my hon. friend, and with every hope that he will pardon my pride in the matter, that the parts of his address that were most applauded were his quotations from my speeches. I trust that this flattery will not make me vain; I mention it only as a fact which is within the knowledge of all who heard the hon. member's speech. The statement made by myself and quoted by the hon. gentleman that we would have an investigation by commission before we altered the tariff called forth a special cheer from hon. members opposite. Does any hon. member on the other side take issue with the promise I made? Would any of them advocate rushing into a revision of the tariff without previous investigation?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Hon. members may laugh at that, but they will not dare to say that they would favour such a course. This work of investigation will be carried out at the proper time.

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Mr. Speaker, I have had occasion to observe already that it was not my purpose to follow my hon. friend fully in the remarks with which he favoured the House; not that those remarks are not worthy of being reviewed, but because I think this is not the proper occasion for doing so. My hon. friend has told us, amongst other things, that he intends at an early day to move the House upon the subject of the Printing Bureau scandal. In view of that statement of his I think he would have done better to reserve the remarks he made on that subject for the promised occasion.

If I gauge accurately the temper of the Canadian people at this moment, the one question which they expect to hear discussed in this House, the one question which is engrossing their thoughts, is that of commercial relations with our neighbours to the south. In this connection my hon. friend this afternoon made some statements which I was sorry to find afterwards he did not follow out to their logical conclusions. He made some statements, however, which I heartily commend. When he spoke of the friendly relations which have existed for so long between Canada and the United States, resulting from a community of origin, to a large degree, resulting from our geographical position, nothing could be more admirable than the sentiments which he therein expressed. When he spoke of the hundred years, or thereabouts, of peace which we have enjoyed with our neighbours, and expressed the hope that we might enjoy another hundred years of peace with improved relations, thereby setting a good example to the world, nothing could be more admirable than the sentiments which he therein expressed. May I say, however, to my hon. friend that if there is one thing which is conducive to peace and harmony between nations, it is free and friendly commercial relations. There has been an impression in this country, nay, a positive conviction in this country, which has been expressed more than once on the floor of this House, that the attitude of our American neighbours towards Canada was not worthy of a great nation. More than once we have heard the complaint voiced in this House that while the Americans were unwilling to buy from us, they would sell to us; that they would not take our products