

ent parts of Canada as to the inadequacy of the supply available. The other was the question of price, and I understand that in respect of both these considerations the work of the Board of Commerce in its session at Montreal has produced excellent results.

My hon. friend has also suggested to us that there should be legislation in this Parliament with regard to certain labour matters. Apparently he has overlooked or forgotten the fact that an industrial conference has been summoned by the Minister of Labour to meet in Ottawa on the fifteenth day of this month, and I venture to hope that out of that conference good results will flow. It is perhaps notable that since that conference was called, the Government of the United States have decided to pursue precisely the same course and have summoned for some early date in that country an industrial conference of the same character as that which the Minister of Labour proposes soon to hold in Ottawa. I think I have covered pretty much all the matters of substance which my hon. friend has alluded to. He did indulge in some badinage at the end as to the disappearance of some of the ministers from the Government.

In so far as Sir Thomas White is concerned, his service to the country during the past eight and a half years has been notable. He was anxious to retire from public life a year or eighteen months ago, and he only continued to discharge the duties of Minister of Finance at my urgent request. His retirement from public life was not due to any disagreement with the Government or any such consideration as my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition has playfully suggested. I think my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition would not desire to have his remarks treated too seriously when he speaks of the cupboard being dry. It is, I am sure, the belief of every hon. member of this House and of every thoughtful man in this country that although the burdens imposed upon Canada by this war are severe, the resources of the country are ample to sustain them and the people are prepared to see that this is done.

My hon. friend referred somewhat playfully also to his desire for a general election. He must have referred to it playfully because I have good reason to believe that not more than two months ago he was very anxious that no general election should be held, and I am inclined to think that he has not changed his mind in the interval. Therefore I assume that he desired us to regard his remarks along that line as

entirely jocose and that he did not intend that they should be seriously taken.

He spoke of the electorate in 1917 being incapable to express its opinion for the reasons—the alleged reasons—which he put forward. Upon consideration, I think he will agree that the electorate in 1917 succeeded in expressing its opinion in a very pronounced and emphatic way. That seems to me to be hardly open to question.

The late Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Carvell) has retired from the position which he held in the Government and has undertaken new duties to which he will bring conspicuous ability, great energy and strong devotion to public duty. I have not the slightest doubt that his discharge of his new responsibilities will be acceptable in every way to the people of the country. The portfolio of Minister of Finance has been accepted by Sir Henry Drayton, to whom my hon. friend has made generous allusion. Sir Henry Drayton, it is perfectly true, had not great experience in financial matters before he undertook, at my request, the duties of Minister of Finance. But we have had men occupying the position of Minister of Finance in this country who, up to the time of their assuming the duties of the office had had absolutely no experience whatever in finance—even less than that which Sir Henry Drayton has acquired in various ways during his career as a member of the bar and in his work as chairman of the Railway Commission. I might suggest to my hon. friend that the gentleman who has been promoted to a seat beside him, the hon. member for Shelburne and Queens (Mr. Fielding), up to the time that he became Minister of Finance certainly had no very great experience in such matters, or knowledge of financial conditions, and yet I am sure my hon. friend would be the last person to suggest that the duties of Minister of Finance for fifteen years were not well discharged by the member for Shelburne and Queens.

Sir Henry Drayton has a great task before him in connection with the duties which he has consented to undertake. I have no doubt that he brings to the discharge of these duties conspicuous ability, great industry, a fine capacity for mastering facts and an earnest devotion to the public welfare. I have every confidence that his discharge of the duties of his office will be acceptable to the members of this House as well as to the people.

My hon. friend indulged in a number of conjectures as to the cause of the resigna-