

After Recess

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker, when the House rose at six o'clock I had been answering the criticism that was made to the effect that this budget had not been brought down in accordance with any principle. I think I made it pretty clear that the government had been guided by fundamental principles which have been the actuating ones of Liberal policy ever since the Liberal party had anything to do with the question of the tariff. The Liberal party has aimed at all times where tariff matters were concerned, to reduce the cost of living and also to reduce production costs by removing in part, and in some cases in whole, the duties on the implements of production of the basic industries. We are endeavouring in that way to increase production in the basic industries of agriculture, mining, lumbering, and fishing, with the hope and expectation not only that those industries will be benefited, but that the whole manufacturing industry of the country, which is necessarily based upon the basic industries, will also be benefited, the trade and commerce and finance of the country similarly benefited, and also, but by no means least, that the consumers of the country will be benefited through obtaining in larger quantities and at lower prices the commodities which they require for daily consumption. In other words, our policy is a truly national policy, the only policy deserving of the name of national policy in this country.

As I remarked this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, this is the third budget which the present administration has presented to parliament. With respect to the other two, what was the nature of the criticism directed against us by the right hon. leader of the opposition and his following? It was all to the effect that we had not been true to Liberal traditions; that we had not carried out our platform; that we had not implemented the pledges given the electors in the general elections of 1921; in particular, it was alleged that the reductions we had made in the duties on agricultural implements in the first budget, and the increase made in the British preference in the second budget, together with other reductions in both budgets in duties upon many of the necessaries of life and other articles of daily use were insufficient to fulfil the reasonable hopes and expectations of those who had given us their support at the polls, in virtue of which support we had been returned to power.

We had this afternoon from the lips of the right hon. the leader of the opposition in

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

the characteristic phraseology to which in this House we are becoming accustomed, the criticism that we have been guilty not only of betrayal, but of infidelity, of infamy, I think, of apostasy. Heaven alone knows how many other phrases of a like kind he used. At any rate the right hon. gentleman could not find words strong enough to indicate that we had not been faithful to our promises. He said that not only was the budget repudiating the Liberal policy, but that the Liberal leader was also repudiating his promises and his pledges. He intimated, and this is a criticism which hon. gentlemen opposite have been given to making, that the government in this matter had been actuated by some ulterior political motive, that we have had primarily in view the making, as my right hon. friend expressed it this afternoon, of a sacrifice to the Progressive gods, that we were "opportunists," that our purpose in this budget had been solely that of winning Progressive support; that such was the main object.

Mr. Speaker, I think the most effective way of answering that criticism is for me to review outstanding features of Liberal policy, and the professions that have been made by the Liberal party in regard to Liberal policy in the two particulars which I have mentioned, namely, the desire of the party to reduce the cost of living, and its desire also to reduce production costs by reducing the duties on the implements of production in the basic industries. I must ask the House to pardon me if with a view to disposing once for all of this kind of criticism, I undertake to quote, as it will be necessary to quote in this connection, for purposes of accuracy, statements which have been made, and which should be regarded as authoritative.

I shall not attempt to go over the whole field of Liberal resolutions. I state again that on the tariff, speaking broadly, it will be found that the Liberal party has consistently advocated measures for the reduction of duties on the implements of production, and also the reduction of duties in a way that will reduce the cost of living. I shall begin with the time with which most of us who are on this side of the House are most intimately associated, and for which we are more or less responsible.

I shall ask the House and the country, in the light of the reference and quotations I propose to give to judge whether in tariff matters we have not consistently advocated a revision downward in the interests alike of producers and consumers; have not advocated specifically a reduction in taxation upon the