

advantage—if not to all Canada, at least to the people of the West.

So far as my own opinion on this question is concerned, I feel that every member must do his own thinking and must make up his own mind as to what his duty is. As I said at the outset, I accepted nomination as a candidate supporting Union Government. There was only one issue during that election, and that was to support our boys at the front and win the war. I, therefore, felt, and I still feel, that so long as the war and its aftermath are before this Government, it is the duty—at least, that is my view—of those elected to support the Government to continue that support.

I was struck by the statement made from two or three quarters that the ex-Minister of Agriculture would have retained his portfolio had the tariff not been touched at all in the present session. If that be so, I cannot help thinking that he would have

12 m. the West and to his country had he remained in the Government until the promised scientific tariff revision is accomplished the coming autumn. The Minister of Finance has promised a thorough inquiry to commence not later than September. It will be admitted generally that the Government have had a tremendous task to perform since they took office, and I think they are entitled to every reasonable consideration in so far as that task has not yet been completed. Although the armistice has been signed, the treaty of peace is not yet signed, and there are momentous problems facing the Government and the country, and the Minister of Finance has very properly said that he and the Government have not had time to make a complete and scientific revision of the tariff. Therefore I cannot help thinking that my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Agriculture, whom I have always held in high esteem, would have better served his country, and particularly the West, had he continued his position in the Government and become a member of the tariff commission in order to be able to accomplish everything in his power to secure the relief which the West so very much desires. Perhaps he feels that he can better accomplish that purpose by withdrawing from the Government. That is a matter for his own conscience to settle, and, as he is a man of honour, I take it that his decision is the result of mature consideration and that he is satisfied that he has taken the right course. So far as I am concerned, I repeat that I have always held the hon. gentleman in high esteem. As I have already said,

there are very strong reasons why many members from the West should take a stand in opposition to the proposed Budget. I am satisfied from conversation with them that it is not their desire to support the amendment, because many of them have advised me that they have no sympathy with it, and I take it that their opposition is purely against the Budget.

With regard to the policy of the Opposition, I was struck by the remark of the member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Butts) that there is no difference really in the two old historic parties with regard to protection. We have had the so-called Liberal party for the last thirty or thirty-five years steadily talking free trade as they have it in Great Britain, the abolition of every vestige of protection from the tariff; but just as steadily practising protection whenever the opportunity presented itself. In support of that statement, Mr. Speaker, let me quote the words of the master of the Laurier administration. After the revision in what is known as the Fielding tariff in 1897, the then Minister of the Interior, the Hon. (now Sir) Clifford Sifton, addressed a large meeting at the town of Perth in my old home county, and declared that the Liberal party had solved the tariff issue, that, owing to the revision, it would no longer constitute an issue as between the two parties, and, he said, "if the Conservatives ever get in power again they will not change the tariff very much." That declaration was never repudiated by his leader or by anybody else in party authority so far as I know. Moreover, you have the actual practice of the party when it was in office. In some remarks which I made in the debate on the address, I dealt very fully with the position of the Laurier party on the tariff. In a speech which he recently made, the member from Brome invited the free traders or the tariff reformers on this side of the House to go up with him to Mount Delectable—he likes to quote either the Scripture or John Bunyan. He said: "If you will come up with me to Mount Delectable, and gaze on the promised land of free trade, you will get renewed life." Now, as a youth, about thirty years ago, I went up to Mount Delectable with the old so-called Liberal leaders and gazed fondly at the promised land of free trade; and I put myself, under the leadership of those so-called Liberal oracles. And where do you suppose they led me? Into the promised land? Not at all; they took me back into the desert, where I wandered with them for fifteen years; and they laughed