

vention of 1893 to take that position before the country; the same reasons which led the Liberal party in 1919 to reaffirm those same principles; the same reasons which led the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) within the last few years to place on the pages of Hansard his reason for believing that the protective principle was not the proper principle on which to base the tariff laws of this country. That is one main reason. The other is this: I am afraid that if the government do not accept this proposal they lay themselves open to the charge which has already been made, that in refusing to put this proposal of tariff reduction in the Speech from the Throne, and in neglecting to make any firm statement that that is their idea, they will leave the door open for people to say that they have abandoned their trade principles. That, I think, would be an unfortunate thing for the Liberal party. That, of course, is something which I, as a humble member of that party, can do no more than respectfully urge my leaders to follow. But although I have no power more than any other member to influence them, I have the power to see that no one can throw that charge in the face of the member for Brome. I think at this time when parliamentary institutions, nay, representative government, are on trial, it is of the utmost importance that there should be no possibility in the public mind for even the suspicion of the thought that public men say one thing in opposition and do another when in power. I am making no charge that that is done or is being contemplated. I do say that the adoption of the suggestion which I make with all seriousness, with all respect, would obviate the very possibility of such a contingency.

Mr. Speaker, I know the hour is late. I have said what I have got to say on this subject. I commend it to the attention of the House and trust that those who have listened to me will be impressed with what I regard as the soundness of my argument.

Mr. A. W. NEILL (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I hope you will excuse my speaking from a seat that is not my own, but, owing to this bedroom drapery effect that has been wished upon us in our absence, we miserable members who are condemned to sit on the back benches are perpetually in a state where we are deprived of light—either the light of day or artificial light, and when we do wish to speak we have to emerge from our caverns and stand blinking in the light of day or artificial day. The same condition prevails with my hon. friends on the back benches opposite, and I think we will soon

[Mr. McMaster.]

qualify under the description contained in the lines of that favourite old hymn:

The race that long in darkness pined  
Have seen a glorious light.

While I am on the subject I also wish to enter a protest against the colour scheme of this arrangement. It is a well-known scientific fact nowadays that in cases of mental or nervous diseases and disorders the colour of the apartment has a good deal to do with the patient's condition. For instance, red irritates a man and blue has a soothing effect. I cannot conceive of any effect that perpetual association with this colour scheme will have on the unfortunate member except to lead him to commit suicide. I never saw a colour like it except in an undertaker's parlour. If the government find the percentage of suicides is greater on the back benches than on the front, they will know the cause.

Now, it is late, and my state of health prevents me dealing with the subject matter of the Speech from the Throne at length. I only wish to touch very briefly on the two amendments, but before I do so I should like to take this opportunity of congratulating the Independent party in this House on the large and important accession to its numbers of late. I say to the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Shaw) that he will find in that party great opportunities for preferment and promotion. The position of whip to that party is vacant to-day. It can be had at a word. The position of chairman of the caucus is also vacant and I would even dangle before him bright hopes of becoming leader of the party. No doubt at the first caucus that will be a subject for our most earnest consideration. I recall some years ago in British Columbia a similar condition occurred. There was a party there of two; I was not one of them. The party consisted of two Liberals, and a divergence of opinion arose between them as to who should be the leader. Unfortunately they brought their dirty linen to wash in the House, and it was described how they had squabbled as to who should be leader. One man said to the other, "Look here, Tom, the position of leader is one of some social standing, and you have to be able to wear a dress-coat and talk to the Lieutenant-Governor. I have a dress coat, and you know, Tom, you have not. Therefore, I think I should be the leader." The other man retorted, "I do not know about dress-coats or about the Lieutenant-Governor, but I can swing a better paint brush than you anyhow." They quarrelled so bitterly over the leadership that one of them became the