

he is the outstanding and greatest living exponent of free trade. If my hon. friend approves of Mr. Asquith and his policies to the extent of cabling congratulations to him on his election, I think we ought to know whether it was done merely on personal grounds, or whether he really does approve of Mr. Asquith's policy.

I shall vote for this amendment, little as I like its preamble, on grounds of broad public policy. A coalition government has much to say for itself, and there is much to be said for it in time of war, because in time of war you are dealing with an external foe, and a coalition government is frequently the best means of concentrating the whole powers of the nation on defeating the foe. After the war is reasonably over the same argument for the existence of the coalition no longer exists. Indeed, there are many grounds, one of which I just touched upon, why the argument is the other way. The moment the war is over domestic politics become more important. Take the vexed question of the tariff. How can hon. gentlemen in the same Cabinet, holding almost diametrically opposite views on tariff questions, possibly touch the tariff in a coherent and effective manner? The thing is an impossibility. And so along many other lines of policy.

I want to say that in this Cabinet, even now, notwithstanding the withdrawals from it, there is any amount of high political ability. This was still truer before the various withdrawals from the Cabinet. But ability gives no guarantee of Cabinet cohesion. My hon. friend the leader of the House (Sir George Foster) said the other night that the Government had never produced a policy upon which the Cabinet was not absolutely united. That, however, may carry with it, I think, the legitimate inference that policies upon which they could not unite were not produced, which would go far to justify some of us in voting for this amendment. Now, doubt has been cast upon the sincerity of the amendment. I do not take the amendment as indicating merely a personal wish. So far as the desire for an election is concerned, Mr. Speaker, I should say that at the present moment any hon. member who is pining for an election is fonder of adventure than I am. The field of elections is a splendid one for any man who has a fancy for adventures, but I imagine that politics at the present time would impress with great emphasis upon any one of us, who was looking at this matter from a personal point of

view, the old doctrine that self-preservation is the first law of nature. But I do not conceive that this amendment is the expression of a personal desire or even of a personal belief so far as the mere holding of an election is concerned. The people have rights as well as the members of this House, and I think that the conclusion of the amendment is an expression of the opinion that the people voted for this Government on certain specific understandings and that the majority of them now think that the time has come when they should have an opportunity of forming another kind of Government if they so desire.

Now, I listened, as I always do, with the greatest pleasure and attention to the speech of the Minister of the Interior (Hon. Mr. Meighen) last night. He took up ground which had previously been covered well by my hon. friend the President of the Privy Council (Hon. Mr. Rowell), and stated that there was a considerable programme laid down in the year 1917 besides the winning of the war. Well, after all, that point can be strained rather far. What I would put to my hon. friend, honestly and with a desire that he should get my point of view at least, is this: Were the people in 1917 sufficiently interested in domestic politics ever to have read the programme? I addressed meetings in my own riding every night for six weeks, and I said: "I appear before you as a win-the-war candidate, supporting a win-the-war Government; the winning of the war is the only issue at stake, and I support the steps that the Government believe to be necessary for that purpose." And I venture to think that all over Canada that was the attitude of the candidates on the Government side, and that was the understanding of the people. What did they understand, and what did they vote on? What did they care about patronage when the Kaiser's troops were threatening to take Paris and overrun the channel ports? The only matter in the minds of the people was the winning of the war.

Now, my hon. friend raised another point which is of very great importance to Western Canada, and that is in regard to the question of redistribution being carried out after the census of 1921. This Government cannot give us any guarantee that they will deal with the question of redistribution. If retirements from the Government continue at the rate at which they have been occurring, before redistribution comes about the Government will have become entirely disintegrated. We cannot possibly, in the