

*The Budget—Mr. Meighen*

The elector who has no partisan bias will find it difficult to give admiration or sympathy to either the deserters or their deserted leader. What is now taking place is a natural result of the peculiarly dishonest campaign the Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King and his lieutenants waged in the last general election. In the low tariff Maritime provinces and in the West the Liberal tariff platform held the centre of the stage. In industrial Ontario the 1919 platform was dismissed as merely a chart, and promises given that no legitimate industry would be injured by a Liberal accession to power. Thus it was that while the party as a whole stood pledged to all-round tariff reduction, Liberal candidates, with Mr. King on the platform endorsing them, were bidding strongly for protectionist support. The present Premier was a party to this deception, and now that circumstances compel him to make important concessions to gain Progressive support, he is in no position to criticize his insurgent followers.

I wonder was that not a pretty fair statement of the position. It is very hard to tell what a verdict is under conditions of that kind. We hear now loud and long proclamations of the death knell of protection, while the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Motherwell) stands and says: The issue now is clear; we are against, you are for protection.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: Hear, hear.

Mr. MEIGHEN: "Hear, hear," he says, but do you believe, Mr. Speaker, that when the test comes his colleagues will abide by that position? Do you believe they won't welsh just as they did in 1921? Don't you know that hon. gentlemen over there, not by the half dozen, but by the score—

Mr. FORKE: You forget that we can do it ourselves.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman says he can do it himself. Let me finish my sentence and I will reply to him—they will go to the country with the words of the hon. member for the county of Quebec (Mr. Lavigneur), with the words of the hon. member from Charlevoix-Montmorency (Mr. Casgrain) who declared that the Minister of the Interior a single member of the government had no right to speak for the government—they will go to the country with these words on their lips, and consequently if they come back as Liberals at all they will come back by the protectionist vote. Now, the leader of the Progressive party says, "We will do it ourselves." Let me say frankly now in the face of hon. gentlemen to my left that while those across the way will welsh on the issue—the Progressives—will welsh themselves. Yes, in the last election they did not stand true. In the last election down in the county of Cumberland their candidate ran on a platform of protection for the coal industry; outside of coal he did not care. In the last

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election the hon. member for South Waterloo (Mr. Elliott)—who sits among them, who votes with them, but who now has flinched at this budget—went to his constituents on a protectionist platform. He declared that we had to have a tariff commission in this country before whom manufacturers could go and if they needed protection they would get it. I do not know that hon. gentlemen to my left are very much entitled to boast of their superior position. All we want, all we ask is that the word of the Minister of Agriculture, the word of the Minister of the Interior, be accepted, and that we go squarely to the people of Canada on the protection issue.

It is contended in respect chiefly of our grain producers whose crop of wheat is largely—about half, I think—an export crop, that they have to sell their wheat in an export market and take the export price; that consequently in respect of that particular product, they cannot be protected—their price cannot be raised by a tariff and they argue accordingly that those wheat growers have no particular interest in the home market, that however large it gets it would not affect the price of their export products. I have some agreement with the statement of fact, and I have always contended that in respect of a product such as grain where there is a large export the price is naturally on the export level.

Yes I have some agreement with the statement of fact, but is it to be argued that because by its means you cannot raise the price of wheat, the home market is not of value to Canada, and is not of value even to the raiser of wheat in this country? The hon. member for Battleford (Mr. McConica) argues in this House that the home market is a myth. He has a very poor opinion of the home market and describes it in language of contempt. I venture to say that when he was in public life in Ohio he did not describe the home market of the United States as a myth or if he did it would not be much wonder he is now in Canada. In the first place the home market is of tremendous value to the rest of the country. As respects wheat, something that we export in very large quantities, I do not believe the home market could directly or very substantially affect its price. But have we no interest besides wheat? Have not the farmers of Canada, as respects a vast proportion of their products a vital interest in the home market? Besides the bringing to them purchasers for the great body of their products—the best market they possibly