

Mr. HUGHES. I would like to ask my hon. friend if he has taken any steps in his Budget to provide for an export duty on logs or on pulp-wood ?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The hon. gentleman is well aware, and the House is well aware, that numerous representations have been made to the Government on this question of export duties, as applied not merely to logs, but to a number of other articles. It is a large question and one which we believe should be approached with great consideration and deliberation. We are not prepared to-day to declare our final judgment on that question. In the tariff which I submit to the House, we do not propose an export duty on any article, except on iron which has received a bounty. We do not think it would be prudent at this moment to take the step which the hon. gentleman's question suggests. At the same time, we reserve our judgment on that point, and the matter may come up again at a later stage of the session.

We have of late read and heard expressions of opinion that the trade of the country has been very much upset, not so much by uncertainty as to the nature of the tariff, as by the delay in the announcement of it ; and while there seems to be some hesitation in the extension of trade at the time our fiscal system is under review, yet I cannot regard the existence of this period of suspense as wholly hurtful. Warehouses which have been over-full will be drained of their stocks, long credits and over-drafts will be considerably reduced, and in the end business will be established on a firmer basis ; and once the details of the tariff are announced, trade will not only seek its accustomed channels, but will flow in increased volume. Throughout the whole Dominion the prospects look encouraging. In Manitoba and the North-west Territories, in consequence of better harvest and better prices for grain, the cloud that has been overhanging for some time seems to be lifting, and with the removal of restrictions and a better administration by my hon. friend the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton), I look forward to that country going rapidly ahead. Further west, our distant province of British Columbia is experiencing an impetus from the development of her rich mineral deposits. In the older provinces there is the promise of a prosperous year, and, as I have said, business is only waiting for the details of the tariff to be announced, to resume its accustomed channels in increased volume.

In conclusion, permit me to sum up the chief points of the policy which I submit to this House. The Liberal party, in its platform at the Ottawa convention, declared itself to be in favour of a reduction of the tariff. That pledge we have fulfilled to-day by substantial reductions in our general tariff, and still further by the large reduc-

tions made in our reciprocal tariff. The Ottawa platform pledged the Liberal party to endeavour to bring about the desired reform with the least possible disturbance of business, and with no injustice to any class. That pledge we have fulfilled to-night by placing on the Table of the House a tariff which in its every line shows that the Government have approached the subject with the utmost consideration, and with a desire to disturb in the least possible degree the various business interests of the Dominion. The Ottawa platform pledged us to have particular regard for a reduction of duties on British goods, and my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Davies) moved in this House a resolution affirming that policy. We have fulfilled that pledge to-night in the most ample manner. The Ottawa platform pledged the Liberal party to use all honourable efforts to bring about better trade relations with the United States. We have already taken the first step in that direction by commissioning two Ministers of this Government to visit Washington and make known the fact—if it was necessary to make it known—that Canada is willing to negotiate with our American neighbours for a fair and reasonable reciprocity treaty. If our American friends wish to make a treaty with us, we are willing to meet them and treat on fair and equitable terms. If it shall not please them to do that, we shall in one way regret the fact, but shall nevertheless go on our way rejoicing, and find other markets to build up the prosperity of Canada independent of the American people.

We present to this House a tariff which has the advantage of being simpler than the one that now exists, and I feel assured that it will to a considerable extent reduce that friction which has so long existed between the merchants of the country and the Custom-houses. We submit a tariff which largely abandons the specific duties that have been so unjust to the poorer classes. We submit a tariff in which the large free list is practically not disturbed, but has large additions made to it. We give to the country the great boon of free corn, which will have an important effect on the development of our farming interests, and particularly the dairying interest, to which we must look in a very large degree for the prosperity of our farmers and the increase of our exports. We give to the country a reduction of the duty on coal oil, and the removal of burdensome restrictions respecting the sale of coal oil. We give to the farmer his fence wire at a low rate of duty for the present year, and place it on the free list from the 1st of January next. We give him his binder twine on the same terms—a lower rate of duty for the present, and free binder twine from the 1st day of January next. We give the medical and dental professions a boon, which the younger and less