

There never was a clearer issue before the people than today. It is simply an issue of Union Government and a vigorous prosecution of the war, or Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Canada's virtual withdrawal from the war.

I think my hon. friend knew better than to say what he did say in reference to Sir Wilfrid Laurier at that time, but apart from that portion of the quotation, let me repeat what he said as to the issue itself:

It is simply an issue of Union Government and a vigorous prosecution of the war.

Is that the issue at the present time? I am sure my right hon. friend cannot lay claim to office in virtue of those terms. My right hon. friend concluded his speech with this reference which is interesting:

I appeal to the people of Manitoba, I appeal to the people here, to give to this Government its mission, to the Prime Minister of this country his mission, to carry on. He is the man who will perform the task.

Now what was my right hon. friend aiming at in that remark, when he said that day, speaking about the Prime Minister, "He is the man?" He did not then say "I am the man"; but that is what he is saying to-day. He is telling the people of Canada to-day that the verdict which was given in 1917 was a mandate to him to carry on the Government of this country. Now I say that unless he is prepared to stand up and make that statement here, in the presence of his colleagues and the members of the House generally, neither he nor his Government has any authority to carry out what they propose to do and they are acting in direct violation of the spirit of the constitution of the country.

Mr. Speaker, there is a matter to which I wish particularly to refer in this connection. I notice that in the Speech of His Excellency to Parliament reference is made to the Customs Tariff. That reference begins:

My advisors are convinced of the necessity for the revision of the Customs Tariff.

Well, they have got along thus far but it has taken them a long time. We told them year after year there was need for that revision. It is interesting to notice that my right hon. friend now admits that there is need for revision; but I want to ask him by what right he and his ministry are presuming to undertake the revision of the tariff? That is the question that should be answered I think before we discuss the tariff one way or another in this

House. My right hon. friend knows, or ought to know that when an appeal was made to the people of Canada in 1917 there were certain questions, certain subjects, which were expressly excluded from consideration by the electorate and by the Parliament that was to be returned that year. It was recognized it would not only be difficult but that it would be impossible to form a Government if certain questions were to be considered by the parliament then to be elected. The tariff was one of those questions and I now say to my right hon. friend that when the Government of 1917 was formed it was with the distinct understanding that the tariff would not be brought up in parliament under that administration. Therefore he has no right and no authority to introduce that subject for discussion at the present time; it should remain for the consideration of a parliament that is truly representative of the people of Canada.

Let me make perfectly clear to the House just how far my right hon. friend and the colleagues who were associated with him at that time went in expressly excluding the tariff from any consideration by this parliament. I shall take first the speech that was delivered by the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar). Here is the statement of that hon. gentleman made at the meeting at which my right hon. friend was one of the speakers:

After I had taken my seat in the Cabinet, a friend of mine in Ontario, one of the most intelligent among the eastern farmers, met me in Toronto. The first thing he said to me was, "What concessions did you get on the tariff?" I told him that I had not got any, and that I had not asked any. That is not to say that I did not feel strongly on the tariff, but I feel that the present issue is not the tariff, but the winning of the War, and to prosecute that great purpose this Government has been formed, and old political opponents like the gentlemen you see here on the platform have struck hands across the Cabinet table of the nation and are going to guide the nation's destiny in this time of peril.

I ask my right hon. friend if he hears those words? Let me repeat them again:

That is not to say that I do not feel strongly on the tariff, but I feel the present issue is not the tariff but the winning of the war.

Could there be a clearer statement than that made by a member of the Government at the time? The hon. member for Marquette was speaking as a member of the Government. He was speaking as a member of the Government of which my right hon. friend was at the time a member, and he said at that time that the tariff would