

other principles are in the other party. We have had a great dividing line between the two parties in Canada for more than a generation, and we have those who believe that the tariff of this country should be a low tariff, primarily intended for the purpose of raising a revenue, and we have those who believe that the tariff should be a machine for protecting the manufacturers and other interests in the country. There is room for differences of opinion. Honest men may be on both sides of the question, but I say that now, when we have returned to peace, cleavage in opinion is bound to arise. What is the situation in Canada to-day? We are face to face with an appalling debt and before the war we had pushed our urban railway development to such an extent—and here I will not ask you to decide with me, or discuss who is responsible for pushing it to that extent—that we had outstripped, I think, by a generation our rural development. We built railways, and several of those roads are bankrupt. We had last session to consider the taking over of the Canadian Northern railway, which was a tremendous liability on the back of the country, a railroad which will not carry itself for years to come, and, by the way, we had to spend \$8,000,000 for the privilege of taking over that liability. We find to-day that the Grand Trunk Pacific is not paying its way, and that the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, the parent company does not want to implement its obligations in regard to the Grand Trunk Pacific. We are face to face with this situation: that our financial and economic future is in danger unless we augment by fifty to one hundred per cent, the rural population of this country. That is the way to look at it. It is not a question altogether of high tariff or low tariff; to use an expression time and again given me by safe and sane men, "It is a condition and not a theory that confronts us." Now, how are we going to increase the rural population of this country? Good roads are a good thing, better schools are a good thing, and co-operative societies are a good thing; but what we need more than anything else is to give to the agriculturists of this country as advantageous conditions under which to operate as are given in any other part of the world, and notably in the United States. In order to do that, we must so arrange our tariff that what our agriculturists require to buy, they can buy at a reasonable price, because certainly, as far as our western agriculturist is concerned, he has to take the world's price for what he has to sell, and

[Mr. McMaster.]

it is not fair that he should have to pay a quarter or a third, or in some cases almost half as much again, as the natural price for what he has to buy. I say that that is the first great argument in favour of the lowering of the tariff, and I do not think that, with all the best will in the world, the interests represented, and ably represented by gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, are prepared to go that far with me in regard to the tariff question. There is an issue between us, and there will be a healthier condition in Canadian public life when that issue is practically admitted. Then I say that protection is merely State aid given by a community to certain industries. You cannot tax yourself into prosperity any more than you can pull yourself up by your boot straps. It imposes a tremendous burden on the consuming public of this country, and that burden is a good deal greater than the amount of money which finds its way into the treasury. There are those in this country—and I think their number is increasing from day to day—who say that the tariff should be swept away altogether. Although I believe thoroughly in the principle of free exchange, I do not think that would be fair or wise. It would not be fair to invested capital, and it would not be wise, because a very moderate tariff should be retained as a means of collecting revenue, but a 42½ per cent tariff is not a means of increasing revenue. It is a means of keeping goods out of your country. I hope I shall not be accused of pro-Germanism in advocating the policy and practice of free exchange. I saw during the recess a speech made by the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. Currie) in which he said that if the war was on he would accuse those who advocated a lower tariff of pro-German feeling. It is somewhat difficult for me to follow the mental processes of the monopolists of this country because I had been taught that Great Britain was the great example of free trade and that Germany was one of the great protectionist countries of the world. Every protectionist government in the last war, with the exception of that of the United States, which had a vast internal area of free trade, had to have recourse to the necessity of borrowing for the purpose of meeting its debts while Great Britain financed not only herself, not only her incomparable effort in the war on land and sea and in the air, but financed her Allies and her dependencies very largely through taxation raising from a quarter to