

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 not be considered. On the basis of that assurance he made his appeal to the electors of western Canada, and of other parts of the Dominion as well. In the face of that I ask my right hon. friend how can he presume to deny to the people of Canada the right to return a representative parliament to deal with that issue when the time comes for it to be taken up.

The hon. member for Marquette was not the only minister who spoke in that way at that time. A member of the present administration—the Minister of Immigration and Colonization—(Mr. Calder)—also gave his word to the electors of Canada as to what would be done by the administration. I now ask my hon. friend (Mr. Calder) how he reconciles his remaining as a member of the Government which contemplates a revision of the tariff with the statements which I am about to read to him—statements made at a time when the Minister of Immigration and Colonization gave his word of honour as a public man to the people of Canada as to the grounds on which the administration should be returned in 1917. The Minister of Immigration and Colonization said:

It is because we are in the war, and all that it means, that we three men happen to sit just where we are to-day. The one main issue is whether we are to carry on or not. We have simply consented to union for the immediate purpose of this war and the solution of the problems arising out of the war and we are prepared—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. KING: I hear hon. gentlemen opposite applauding the statement as to dealing

with the issues that grew out of the war. Do hon. gentlemen opposite mean to say that the tariff is an issue that grew out of the war? If so they can place any issue under heaven in a similar category. If my hon. friend (Mr. Calder) now holds such a view, he surely entertains an entirely different mental attitude from what he did at the time to which I refer, when he declared that the tariff was to be excluded from consideration by the Government. In 1917 my hon. friend was very careful to say that the tariff would not be a matter to be considered.

My hon. friend (Mr. Calder) went on to say:

We were prepared for the time being to sink our differences of opinion in so far as many of the domestic and local problems which we have are concerned. We must do that to get union. Just imagine what would have happened if Mr. Crerar had sat down with Sir Thomas White to try and get together on questions of tariff.

Let me repeat: the hon. minister said:

Just imagine what would happen if Mr. Crerar had sat down with Sir Thomas White and tried to get together on the question of the tariff.

I ask my hon. friends opposite who applauded the idea of the tariff being an issue growing out of the war whether they will applaud that remark? Unless hon. gentlemen opposite are prepared to do so they have no right to presume that the tariff is a question with which they can deal to the exclusion of a parliament so empowered by the people. My hon. friend went on to say:

We would never have had Union if one of the requirements was that it had to be reached on the question of the tariff.

I ask my hon. friend, as a member of the present Government and as a member of the Government speaking at that time, whether he meant what he said on that occasion.

An hon. MEMBER: He was only joking.

Mr. KING: Was my hon. friend telling the people the truth at that time or had he something else in his mind? Was he quite sincere in what he said then? I find difficulty in reconciling his utterances with his remaining at the present time in a ministry which is attempting to deal with the tariff. Let me read the sentence again:

We would never have had Union if one of the requirements was that it had to be reached on the question of the tariff.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Who said that?

Mr. KING: The Minister of Immigration and Colonization, the present President of the Privy Council. He went on to say:

We found it absolutely necessary on both sides, on the Conservative Party's part and our own, to sink all differences of opinion in connection with these domestic problems. So far as I am concerned, on the questions of tariff, banking, agricultural credit, land settlement, and all those problems affecting our western people, I stand where I stood three weeks ago, and I am certain my friend (Mr. Crerar) does not stand far from that position. But for the time being, we let them go by the board, and we go into this union with an entirely different purpose.

Again, may I ask, in the face of such an appeal to the electorate, the bonafides of which were vouched for by his presence on the platform, and with the Minister of Immigration and Colonization still one of the ministers in his own administration, how dare my right hon. friend presume to say that his Government is justified in dealing with this all-important question, without first giving to the people of Canada an opportunity to return to Parliament a House of Commons that will give a proper expression to their views?

At that time the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar) and my right hon. friend were standing side by side; to-day they are standing directly opposite to each other, taking directly opposite positions. And why did my hon. friend for Marquette leave the ministry of which he was a member? He left it because he felt it was formed for a particular purpose, and when that purpose was fulfilled, that was as far as it had any right or authority to go. He took exactly the same position that my hon. friend has taken here, that the tariff was not an issue with which this Parliament could deal one way or the other. Under these circumstances I ask my right hon. friend, when he retains in his cabinet a colleague who has given a pledge of that kind to the people, how does he presume to suggest to His Excellency that the tariff is a question for discussion at this particular session of Parliament?

But the honourable member for Marquette and the honourable the Minister of Immigration and Colonization were not the only speakers who expressly excluded legislation with respect to the tariff from the jurisdiction of the Unionist Government, or who gave assurances, which the Canadian public were justified in taking as final and authoritative, that the tariff would not be dealt with until some subsequent appeal were made to the electorate with specific reference to domestic issues. The