

*The Address*

repeatedly said to the hon. members of the House that they should not take too seriously what appears in the Speech from the Throne, that probably before the end of the session they would be considerably disappointed. I have here his exact words. In one place he said that the optimism excited in the Speech from the Throne would probably be "greatly depressed" before the session was over, that the Speech from the Throne was apt to be made up in part of forgotten promises and pledges. He referred in his graphic way to the Speech being "an aggregation of the letters of the alphabet". I am not surprised that my right hon. friend has the opinion he has of declarations in the Speech from the Throne, when one considers how he carried out the pledges which were made in the Speech from the Throne as presented to this Parliament last year. May I, for the purposes of making clear the point of view of the present Administration, quote to my right hon. friend the respective paragraphs in the Speeches from the Throne of this year and last year in regard to this important subject of the tariff? The Speech from the Throne of this year as presented by the present Government reads:

You will be invited to consider the expediency of making some changes in the Customs Tariff. While there are details of revision, the consideration of which will require time and care that are not at present available, there are features of the tariff which it is felt may properly be dealt with during the present session.

My right hon. friend characterizes this paragraph as "pallid and barren." Those are the words he applies to the reference in the Speech to the subject of tariff revision. I am quite prepared to admit that the language of that paragraph is not overdrawn. But let me contrast with it the language of the paragraph in the Speech from the Throne of last year which my right hon. friend was responsible for having presented to this House. Here is his reference on the subject of the tariff:

My advisers are convinced of the necessity for revision of the Customs tariff. In order to secure the most complete information a committee has conducted an extensive and thorough inquiry and has secured the views of all parties and interests in every province. The hearings necessary for this purpose have now been completed, and the conclusions founded thereon will be submitted to you in due course.

That paragraph may not be pale, pallid, barren; but I much prefer the one to which my right hon. friend has taken exception,

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

which means what it says, to a paragraph that proved to be without any meaning and wholly untrue, and that has never been fulfilled in any particular.

My right hon. friend asks: what are the changes that are to be made in the tariff. He knows very well that the occasion of the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne is not a time to discuss tariff changes. I think he may feel well assured that the pledge made will be carried out during the course of the present session, and I think that not only he, but hon. members of this House and the country generally, will rejoice that they have, in the person of my hon. friend the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), the one man above all others, in this Dominion, in whom the people of Canada, irrespective of party, have the utmost confidence in dealing with financial and tariff matters.

My right hon. friend seemed to be grieved that during the course of the campaign, in touching on tariff matters, I had made use of a little simile which served to describe my attitude in relation to the management of public affairs and to the tariff in particular. He seemed to think that in dealing with these important public matters, I should not have spoken of a chart and compass, and he sought to convey the impression—at least I thought he did—that in some way or another I had resorted, during the course of the campaign, to an attitude which was wholly new, and which was giving me some means of escape from dealing with tariff matters other than that which I had previously taken. He referred to the convention of the summer of 1919 and intimated that at that convention a platform had been drafted to which I was necessarily obligated, and that in some way I was betraying that whole convention, in the recent campaign, in not going forward with that platform in hand and saying that regardless altogether of existing conditions or the language therein contained, I was supporting it exactly as expressed. In order that there may be no doubt as to the position I took at the time of the convention of 1919 in reference to the platform as laid down, let me read the words which I addressed at that time to the assembled delegates. I have in my hand a copy of the proceedings of the Liberal Convention, and at page 199, my right hon. friend will find the following:

I should be unworthy of any measure of the confidence you have so abundantly bestowed were I not fully conscious of my own