

out of season, that free trade as they have it in England is the proper thing for this country. Remembering how he had told us with that eloquence of his how he had learned free trade under William Ewart Gladstone, we thought he was going to instil into the minds not only of hon. gentlemen on this side of the House but of hon. gentlemen opposite, the same undying principles—until this afternoon, when he said: "A punctilio, the merest technicality, prevents me from supporting the opinions I have held on the tariff during my whole political career."

Mr. Speaker, what is good for this country in the matter of trade? Is a low or a high tariff the best? The Acting Prime Minister will tell me that a high tariff is best; my hon. friend from Red Deer, that a low tariff is best. The hon. gentleman from Red Deer says that a low tariff is best, provided there are no technicalities in the way. Away with such talk about technicalities! How often have I heard the hon. member from Red Deer use similar language: Away with your technicalities and your precedents; give us free trade.

I must now leave, with very great regret, my hon. friend from Red Deer and turn to my hon. friend from Qu'Appelle (Mr. Levi Thomson) for a very brief moment. He is another gentleman who sat with us upon this side of the House; another gentleman who said that he had great difficulty in finding converts, as he put it, to the resolution which I have now in my hand, proposed on the 29th of May, 1917, by the Hon. Frank Oliver, when the war was perhaps at its most critical stage. The hon. member says that he is thoroughly in accord with this present amendment, I understand that the hon. member is a lawyer, who occasionally does some farming. He wants the West to know that he is in favour of this resolution, and he is going to support it by voting against it. He hopes the Government will give consideration to the matter. Why, my hon. friend must know that all Governments give consideration to all matters that come before them; oftentimes that consideration is unfavourable, and sometimes it is favourable, and judging by the attitude of those on the Government benches this afternoon and their attitude during the past few days I do not think I am prophesying rashly when I tell the hon. member for Qu'Appelle that the Government is giving very serious consideration to this question, and its final decision will be unfavourable. After saying that he is in favour of the resolution, the hon. member goes on to say

that he cannot support it because it might result in the defeat of the Government. Surely the hon. gentleman has not reached the stage where he clings more strongly to Government than to principle. I can hardly believe the hon. gentleman is sincere, because upon other occasions when he sat upon this side of the House looking across at the Government he did not care whether the Government was defeated or sustained. (He believed then in principle, but now he has apparently changed, not his principles, let me hope, but his mind. A strong argument which the hon. member brought to the debate this afternoon, and which must have appealed to you, Mr. Speaker, was that whilst he wanted to support the resolution by voting against it, he could not vote for it because it would place his western colleagues in a false position. Mr. Speaker, his vote will not place his western colleagues in a false position if I know anything of the sentiments of the West as we read of them in the Unionist press of today. The West is demanding a lower tariff. Is that not so? The West is not asking hon. members representing western constituencies to wait, but is demanding immediate action. Am I right, or wrong? The hon. member, however, says that he does not want to vote for this resolution, because it will place the western members in a false light. And that can be readily understood. Western Canada has sent representatives here in great numbers to support a lower tariff, and is now demanding action. The West says to its representatives: Now is your time to ask for a lower tariff; we want you to act immediately. One hon. member from the West replies: Will you not wait until the Budget comes down? Another hon. member says: Will you not wait until we see what consideration the Government gives the matter? And yet another hon. gentleman tells us that he will go back to the West and explain his position. He says: It would have been all right for me to do it, but I would have placed my western colleagues in a false light. It seems to me, Sir, that we have come to a time in the political history of Canada when the representatives of the people must not be actuated by political motives, but solely by motives of principle. We, unfortunately—and I shall only allude to the fact in passing—have lost our leader. We have lost one in whom we could confidently place even our own judgment. We were so sure of the greatness of his mind, we were so sure of the position he would take, and that his every action would conduce to the greater advantage of Canada, that we