

nature of what I venture to call the preamble of the amendment. I should have liked the amendment much better if it had called for its result upon grounds of policy rather than upon grounds of personnel. I can scarcely speak with patience of that portion of the amendment which brings the illness of Sir Robert Borden before this House. Sir Robert Borden is as much a victim of the war in his illness as if he had been in a front line trench in France. I have again and again expressed what I consider the indebtedness of this country to the leader of the Government and to all the members of this Government, but in case there is any doubt about where I stand on that matter, I want to say once more that I think the men who formed Union Government discharged a patriotic duty regardless of consequences.

I do not quite see the force of all the speech of my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) in supporting this amendment. Naturally, the speech partook of the nature of what I have ventured to call a preamble. Amongst other things he charged the Government with having no policy. Well, I think there is justice in that charge along certain lines. When you form a Government partly of protectionists and partly of free traders or very-low tariff men it is clear they will not very easily formulate a policy on the tariff, and what is likely to happen to the tariff under those circumstances is that it will be left alone, unless indeed the tariff mongers prove the heavier lot and pull their Liberal brethren with them in raising it. I did not, however, quite understand how my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition could be so light-hearted in charging the Government with having no policy, unless indeed he had gone on to tell what his own policy was. I know that there was a convention, and that a platform was drawn up at that convention, the tariff portion of which was lifted bodily and without apology from the programme of the Dominion Council of Agriculture, with the exception that the western farmers proclaimed themselves free traders in principle at least to the extent of having free trade with Great Britain in five years. So far as I know, that part of the tariff policy of the Dominion Council of Agriculture was not adopted by the official Opposition in this House. That leads me to repeat a statement, which I have no pleasure in making, that the official Opposition has gone back on pre-'96 days in this matter of the tariff, because at that time they

[Mr. M. Clark.]

were looking towards free trade as they have it in Great Britain. I should like some speakers on the Opposition side to tell us exactly where they stand in this matter of free trade and protection. If it is just a case of tinkering and pottering with the tariff, one side is no better than the other, unless there is some principle asserted, some goal to which they are aiming. When my hon. friend from Assiniboia (Mr. Gould) was fighting for his seat in this House on the principle of free trade practically, or near free trade, two of the most energetic followers of my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition went out to prevent him if possible from getting into this House.

Mr. A. R. McMASTER (Brome): Would my hon. friend suggest that the Hon. W. R. Motherwell is not just as sound a low tariff man as he who now represents Assiniboia in this House?

Mr. MICHAEL CLARK: I do not think either the country or I have kept very close track of Mr. Motherwell lately. He was lost in the early snowstorm of the fall. There is one thing, however—and that is that—my hon. friend (Mr. Gould) who represents that constituency is in a vastly better position for carrying out that policy.

Mr. JOSEPH ARCHAMBAULT (Chambly and Vercheres): That is no answer.

Mr. MICHAEL CLARK: I do not know what Mr. Motherwell's views are on the tariff; I hope they are all right. The fact is, Mr. Motherwell's opinions have nothing to do with it. I am simply trying to find out where the leader of the Opposition stands on this question, and I hope some of his followers will tell us, for the country has a right to know. I say that if I vote for this amendment I would rather have voted for it on some ground of policy and principle than on the mere matter of personnel which is raised so prominently in it. I was saying I do not know exactly where the leader of the Opposition stands on this question, and if I were to get my information from some of his doings I should think he had changed his attitude on more than one question since the last general election. Why, he sent a cablegram of congratulation to Mr. Asquith on his election the other day. I think this House would almost need to be told whether that was an act of penance on the part of my hon. friend, because he must recall that Mr. Asquith was the father of compulsory military service in Great Britain, and that