

that actuated these proposals now under consideration.

I disagree with the hon. member for South Grey (Mr. Ball) and with the Finance Minister when they say that this Government are not to blame for a large part of the depression that exists in Canada to-day. Let me ask the Minister of Finance what was the condition of Canada's trade before the outbreak of war in August, 1914? What was the condition as to our imports? My hon. friend from Red Deer (Mr. Michael Clark) put that question to the Minister of Finance the other night—and he did not get an answer. That question has not been answered, and it is not capable of being answered by the Minister of Finance. My hon. friend from Red Deer pointed out that while in the United States and Australia, for months preceding the war, imports were on the increase; in the case of Canada, for months preceding the war, there was a constant falling off of imports. What had the war to do with that situation?

In that connection, let me point out to the House that these tariff changes are not the first that have been brought before this House for the replenishing of a falling revenue. We had a Budget speech about a year ago, in which the Minister of Finance increased the tariff and put new taxes on a very considerable list of articles consumed by the people of Canada. There was no war in April, 1914; and I presume that when these increases in the tariff were made, the object was, as my hon. friend says the object is in the present case, to increase the revenues of the country. Well, let us be frank, and I am going to be frank when I say, notwithstanding the somewhat theatrical statement of the Minister of Finance when he said: "I refuse to vindicate myself; I refuse to answer this imputation against my motives in bringing down these tariff proposals"—that, in my judgment, we have every reason to come to the conclusion that these tariff proposals of the present Budget are just one further step in the carrying out of a definite and settled policy of this Government, which policy they had in their minds when they took office. Since this Government took office we have been given every reason to come to that conclusion. We found this Government tampering with the regulations under which our tariff was administered with reference to certain articles. Take, for instance, the item that means so much to the people of Western Canada, and more or less to all of Canada, the item of lumber, and what did this Government do with reference to that, very

shortly after they came into office? Whereas certain classes of rough lumber had been allowed to come into this country free, on the advice, apparently, of members of this Government, a new decision was arrived at by the Board of Customs, and this lumber was declared to be dutiable at \$2 a thousand feet extra. Nothing saved us from that extra burden but the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, which decision was to the effect that this class of lumber was not dutiable under the statute. But for that decision the people of Canada would have been bearing that extra burden. That is one of a number of such instances. The legislation with regard to the importation of fruit was an instance; the legislation with regard to the importation of fertilizers was another instance. These things, followed up as they were by the legislation of 1914, the tariff changes of last year, I contend, give us every reason to believe that in the proposals now before the House, the Government are simply carrying out a policy which they had laid down for themselves, or which their friends had laid down for them, when they came into office in 1911.

Previous to August, 1914, no war was taking place, yet conditions in Canada were very bad; export trade and revenues were falling off. When the minister made his Budget speech at the last regular session of Parliament, he did not, any more than the humblest member of this House, foresee the conditions of war which now prevail. Yet in view of the falling off of imports and, consequently, of revenue, did not the hon. gentleman foresee that at this session of Parliament the legislation which we are now considering would be introduced? Did he not foresee a deficit, aside altogether from the conditions created by the war? My hon. friend does not answer; perhaps he will later. When he is answering that question, I should like him to answer another. If the taxes that he now proposes to impose upon the people of Canada are, as he calls them, genuine war taxes, what will become of them when the dreadful conflict which is now in progress is brought to a conclusion? If these are war taxes, I presume that they will cease when the war is over. Will the Finance Minister be good enough to tell the House at some future time, if not at the present moment, whether or not these proposed enactments will be wiped off the statute books when the war is over and Canada's trade resumes something like a normal condition? I think that is a fair question to ask the hon. gentleman, in view of the fact that