

United States. The only reason it is seriously considered is that it is combined with other concessions contained in this Treaty. If the Treaty drops it is unlikely that for some time to come we shall hear anything of free wheat and cattle. By that time our country will be sufficiently developed to stand on its own feet. That is exactly why the large commercial interests of the United States are pushing this Treaty. The plain fact is that the great trusts of the United States want to get at Canada and exploit it and by this Treaty we are helping them to do it.

The young men of Western Canada who expect to live there and see their country prosper and afford them an opportunity of making a livelihood ought to stand together and fight against this proposition.

There are just two possible policies for Canada, one is Commercial Union with the United States, and the other is Commercial Independence. We are making our choice now.

If we decide for Commercial Union we shall henceforth be dominated by the United States to the entire exclusion of British interests.

CANNOT FOLLOW LEADER.

House again in Committee of Ways and Means.

Hon. CLIFFORD SIFTON (Brandon). Mr. Chairman, I agree with what has been said by members of the House who have preceded me respecting the very great importance of the question we are now discussing. I have found it the most important question which has come before this House since I have had the honour of being a member of it, and when I say frankly to the committee that the result of my investigation has been to lead me to the conclusion that I cannot follow the leader of the party with which I have been associated all my lifetime must necessarily be of an extremely painful character. With the members of the Government I am and always have been upon the best and closest possible terms politically and socially. Some of the members of the Government I regard as my closest personal friends. And, away back in the county of Brandon there are a great many men who for 23 years have been my supporters, who, I am quite satisfied, will find great difficulty in understanding why I find it necessary to vote against the party with which they and I have been identified so long.

SATISFIED IN 1897.

It will be readily understood that my convictions upon the subject are extremely strong. Twenty years ago the Liberal party had as its policy a policy of unrestricted reciprocity. As a young man, young in public life at that time, I followed the leaders

of my party; I took an active part in that election. There are, I think, some gentlemen in the House here against whom I spoke in that campaign, and to the best of my ability I endeavoured to convince the electors whom I addressed that the policy of my party was a wise and a prudent policy. I am free to say, Mr. Chairman, that almost before the campaign was over I had succeeded in convincing myself that we were wrong. From that time on my views have undergone, perhaps a gradual, but a steady and a certain change. When the tariff was revised in 1897 I was satisfied that the tariff as we adopted it at that time represented a good policy for the Dominion of Canada and possibly the best policy we could adopt. And, ever since 1898, when under the Joint High Commission efforts were made to secure some kind of reciprocity with the United States, my conviction has been strengthening in that direction. A couple of years ago I had the honour of delivering an address in New York in the Chamber of Commerce of that great city, and I indicated pretty clearly at that time, though to a somewhat hostile audience, what my views are.

NOT SPASMODIC OPINION.

Now, I am well aware, Mr. Chairman, that it is a matter of possibly small concern as to when and how my opinion has been arrived at, but I will ask the House to pardon me for mentioning the facts which show that my opinion on this subject is not a spasmodic or suddenly formed opinion, but is the mature conviction which comes to me as the result of something over twenty years of pretty close contact with the affairs of Canada. Some of my newspaper friends have intimated that there was some mystery about my opinions upon this subject. I have not sought to make any mystery of them. I have perhaps avoided discussing the subject with my political friends because I did not desire that any of them should feel that I was endeavouring to induce them to adopt my opinions, and I did not desire to say anything to any of my Liberal friends except what I was prepared to say in the presence of the members of the Government and in the presence of the House. But what I have to say about that is this: We have in the Dominion of Canada pretty strong party ties. We do not leave our party for small reasons. We do not leave our party because it happens to do something that we do not at the moment approve of—because it builds a bridge or a court house or a public building or even a railroad that we do not think necessary at the time. We have a pretty strong idea with regard to party allegiance, and my conviction is that it is a good thing and contributes to the stability of government that we have that idea.