

the Throne, which was regarded as constituting a motion of want of confidence in the government:

That in view of the increased burden of taxation and of the hardship which many of the people suffer from this burden, and the unrest and dissatisfaction arising therefrom, and in view of the desirability of adopting measures to reduce the cost of production, and effect such relief to consumers and producers as may be within the power of parliament, the House is of the opinion that substantial reductions of the burdens of customs taxation should be made with a view to the accomplishing of two purposes of the highest importance.

(1) Diminishing the very high cost of production, which presses so severely on the primary producers of the country at this time;

(2) Reducing the cost of living to the great masses of the common people, many of whom are being forced out of the country by the prevailing economic conditions.

This amendment is the same as the resolution moved by the present Minister of Finance in 1920, and there is no excuse that I can see for the government party voting for it a couple of years ago and voting against it to-day. It may be presumed that both these resolutions embody the viewpoint of the Liberal party upon the questions with which they deal. If so, how did it happen that hon. members opposite voted against that very proposal a few days ago? The Minister of Finance declared that that resolution, which was really his own resolution that he moved two years ago, must be taken as a vote of no confidence. He indicated that no self-respecting government could take it otherwise. My humble opinion is that the government would have been really more self-respecting if it had accepted these amendments. Of course, I could not presume to tell the hon. Minister of Finance what he should and should not do as a parliamentarian, but that was my humble opinion. However, the hon. gentleman did declare that the resolution moved by the hon. member for Springfield (Mr. Hoey), and also the amendment to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Shaw), constituted motions of no confidence, and that complicated the situation so much for the members of the party that they found themselves on the horns of a dilemma, and most of them stuck on the horns. The fact is, we know as well as we can know anything with respect to anybody, that there are a great number of hon. members on the other side of the House who do believe in the reduction of the tariff, and who under different circumstances would vote for such a resolution; yet only one of them remembered his principles on that occasion, and all the rest voted with the government. I am not blaming any hon. gentleman on the other side for votin-

with the government, I am not insinuating that their votes were any less honourable than mine was. Indeed, I believe that they voted just as I did, weighing these issues in their own minds as best they could. I am not speaking against the actions of the hon. members on that particular occasion: I am speaking against the practice, the system, which forces them into this unfair and embarrassing situation—I believe that hon. members of this House will agree with me that this is a very undesirable position in which to be placed.

I notice that the opposition made a good deal of capital out of the dilemma of the government in connection with the amendments quoted, but there was really no need for them to do so, for I am quite certain that the opposition would do likewise on a similar occasion—I know it has done so before. I am quite sure the Progressives will do the same if only they get the opportunity, and I believe the Labour party would do the same under the present system. It is pretty well accepted, by sociologists at all events, that the generality of humanity under similar conditions will act in pretty much the same way. So, what I am trying to correct by this resolution is a parliamentary practice which embarrasses the members of parliament, and particularly the members of the government party, by confusing the issue

4 p.m. under discussion with the life of the administration, and thus forcing hon. members at times to vote against their own ideas and their own principles.

Mr. McQUARRIE: May I be permitted a question? If this resolution passes, what is to prevent the government from considering any particular motion as a want of confidence motion in the government, and acting accordingly? What would prevent the Minister of Finance, for instance, whom my hon. friend has mentioned, from making a similar statement to the House on another occasion? What is to prevent the government from advising the whips that they will consider a certain motion as a want of confidence motion? Then, what good can follow the passing of this resolution?

Mr. IRVINE: I think the hon. member has misunderstood the resolution. If I have got his question correctly, the resolution will prohibit the very possibility which he anticipates.

Mr. McQUARRIE: In what way?

Mr. IRVINE: In this way. If this resolution is carried, it will not be left in the hands of the government to say when the