

*Government's Right to Office*

either are on the treasury benches or are aspiring to get there. I prefer to look at the far-reaching effect which the division on this question will have.

Each of the two major groups in this House has had a policy, presumably at least. It is recognized that the Liberal policy is one of either free trade or freer trade. At any rate, prior to an election that is the policy. The Conservative government, in season and out of season, has preached and practised a high tariff policy. I am not so sure, Mr. Speaker, that in this House the two old-line parties are so very far apart on that policy. I have had the privilege of sitting in this chamber for the past four years, and so far as tariff concessions given us by the Liberal government go, we would not need a very large suit case to carry them all home. But in profession at least there is a difference between the policies of the two major groups. Therefore if any such policy were put into force, it would have a far-reaching effect, an effect that would extend from one end of the Dominion to the other, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Business conditions throughout the country are affected by whichever course is taken in this House.

Now, in order to give an intelligent vote on this question it is necessary that we look at different phases of it. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) made his motion in reference to the Speech from the Throne, and an amendment has been moved to that motion. It is perhaps necessary, then, that we glance hastily at the Speech from the Throne and see what is embodied therein, because if a group proposes a legislative programme our vote is perhaps going to be largely influenced by such programme. I find in the legislative programme as outlined in the Speech from the Throne a clause embodying rural credits. Now this is something that is of vital importance to the portion of the country from which I come. Western Canada is vitally interested in the question of rural credits. We have out there not only hundreds but thousands of struggling agriculturists with a load of debt upon their shoulders, a debt upon which they are paying eight, nine, ten and even twelve per cent interest, running into thousands of dollars, and in many cases it is impossible for them to carry that load. Some of them are getting from under it one way or the other; it is absolutely necessary in the case of a great many of these people that something should be done to relieve them of that burden. Here we have in the Speech from the Throne a definite promise that a rural credit scheme is going to be given us. Well, I was a member of the Banking and Commerce committee dur-

[Mr. Carmichael.]

ing the past four sessions. I recall that in the session of 1924, after considerable debate, we passed a resolution calling upon the government in the session of 1925 to implement by legislation the suggestions contained in Dr. Tory's report. I recall in the session of 1925 what a strenuous time we had in the Banking and Commerce committee to get a resolution before this chamber to the effect that such legislation should be proceeded with. I recall particularly the stand of many hon. members from the province of Quebec, and I was given to understand in the last session that the representatives from that province did not favour rural credits for Canada. Well, when I look across at the treasury benches and I see, or pretend to see, 61 members from the province of Quebec out of the 101 government supporters, I wonder how the change of heart came about. I wonder whether it is a real conversion or merely a bait handed out for Progressive support. In the session of 1925, after repeated urgings on the part of members of the Banking and Commerce committee from this group, we succeeded in having a semblance of legislation introduced, but it was not brought down until the dying days of the session, and it was well known that such legislation would never be enacted.

Then, following that, we have in the Speech from the Throne another clause stating that the government proposes forthwith the completion of the Hudson Bay railway. Very good. I am sure that a great sigh of gratitude arose from western Canada when they read that statement. But looking back over the last four sessions—and it is rather unfortunate for the government benches that we do not forget all the things that happened in the last four years—I recall that the then member for Prince Albert, Mr. Knox, persistently and insistently brought forward a resolution urging the completion of the Hudson Bay railway. Each session—in 1922, 1923, 1924 and 1925—that resolution was brought forward. We had 117 members sitting on the government benches and we had something over 60 members in this group; it would have been an easy matter to introduce legislation and carry it through if there had been any desire to do so. But what did we find in the last parliament? When we took a division in 1924, only 20 members voted for the completion of the Hudson Bay railway, and four others were paired—a total of 24 votes cast in favour of the scheme in that House of 235 members. Now, I am led to ask myself: Whence came this change of heart on the part of those on the government benches? I recall that the hon. member for Queens-Lunen-