

TELLS OF CONVERSION TO TARIFF REDUCTION

Hon. Vincent Massey Opposed 1924 Cuts, Only to Find They Aided Industry.

Orono, Oct. 8.—The attitude of the implement manufacturers with reference to the 1924 Budget was dealt with by Hon. Vincent Massey, speaking at Ebeneser. He had sincerely thought that the original Budget proposals would injure the implement industry, but events having demonstrated otherwise he was willing to admit himself mistaken. When study and experience showed him that his opinion was wrong, consistency ceased to be a virtue, and became something closely resembling dishonesty of mind, he said, amid applause. He then read the following statement:

"There are thousands of men and women to-day who have genuine fears for the welfare of this country unless the doctrine of high protection is accepted. I believe these fears, however sincere, are founded on an error, which, had any chance of being accepted, would be a tragic error, I think. However, I can understand the honest fears of those who feel strongly on the tariff issue. I had occasion myself to experience anxiety on this subject—in the case of the tariff adjustments on farm implements a year and a half ago. It was not a case of whether or not high protection should be applied but rather whether the existing very moderate protection should be reduced. To this reduction we demurred, and it has been frequently asked of late, 'How can a representative of the implement industry who protested against the reductions in duties in the Budget of 1924 and thought that those reductions would injure his industry—how can such a person later subscribe to the policy of a Government that made the reductions in question? Is this not inconsistent?' Well, ladies and gentlemen, consistency, I believe, is a virtue, but if a man remains consistently on one opinion in the face of study and experience which shows him that that opinion is wrong, consistency ceases to be a virtue, and becomes something closely resembling dishonesty of mind.

"Now, may I say to you with perfect frankness that I have never attempted to conceal the thought that a year and a half ago I opposed with all my might the reductions in duties on farm implements. The old saying goes: 'An open confession is good for the soul.' Let me make one. In conversation with members of all the parties, and in correspondence, I, along with the other executives in the industry, honestly urged the case for the retention of the existing schedule of customs duties at that time.

"When we were asked for the facts, we gave them, but when an effort was made from any source to use the opinions privately expressed as weapons to be used on either side in the political controversy, we refused, because a private company in the nature of things must remain aloof from such discussion, excepting when called upon to make its case, which it should do only through its own responsible officers.

Shared Misgivings of Others.

"I thought at that time that whatever protection was afforded to the farm implement industry by the existing tariff schedule was reasonable, because the industry then seemed certain to be injured by lower duties. When the Budget was brought down, I felt that serious harm had been done to the industry. I felt, too, that the compensations offered to the industry at that moment were insufficient and illusory. If I had felt at the time that the tariff adjustment was to be of substantial value to agriculture, I could not have stood in the way of what would have been a national gain, but it seemed then that the reductions in duties would be of trifling assistance to the farming industry, which it was intended to benefit. Feeling, therefore, as we did that the proposed measure in 1924 would injure one industry without materially helping another, we entertained a feeling of genuine resentment, and this I expressed, even going so far as objecting for these reasons that the proposal, in professing to do what we felt was not being done, involved an element of insincerity and hypocrisy on the Government's part. A statement issued by my own company after the close of the Budget debate expressed our intention to carry on under the altered conditions, although I shared the misgivings of the others at the time as to our ability to do so successfully. So much for my own honest but, as it turned out, erroneous opinion at the time of the tariff controversy a year and a half ago.

"What has happened since to change my view? Before the discussion was over the Government left the farm implement industry in the final adjustment of compensations in substantially the same position it occupied before the reductions were made. A year and a half of practical study of the tariff issue has brought me to the conviction that the fears of the industry which I fully shared a year and a half ago were unfounded, and I believe that the increasing prosperity of the industry as a whole is an irrefutable answer to the charge that any injury was done to it by the Budget of 1924."

There were grouches in the old days, but it was called liver trouble instead of cynicism. It's merely a matter of time until a white lie takes on a somber hue.

Unemployment

Toronto Star.

Those who refer to unemployment as though it were a feature of the King, but not of the Meighen, regime, are refuted by the fact that there was unemployment in Mr. Meighen's time such as has never since then existed in Canada. To attribute it all to Mr. Meighen and his policies would be as foolish as the attempt now being made to blame Mr. King for the unemployment of more recent date. But as the latter attempt invites comparisons, it is well that they should be available. They are furnished by a non-partisan authority, the deputy minister of labor, in his annual reports.

For the fiscal year 1920-21, ending with March of the latter year, the deputy minister reported: "The decline of employment began in October (1920), and the volume of unemployment steadily increased until the number of unemployed was estimated in round figures at 200,000." This, of course, was during Mr. Meighen's premiership.

The next fiscal year, 1921-22, ending with March, 1922, was also a Meighen year, as Mr. King was not chosen premier until it was three-quarters over, and as his first budget had yet to be presented when it closed. For this year, the official re-

port was as follows: "The depression in commercial activities which set in about the middle of the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1921, and was the outstanding feature of industrial conditions of that year, continued substantially unchanged throughout the fiscal year 1921-22, and the problem of unemployment, which in the winter of 1920-21 had been for the first time the subject of action on the part of the federal government, again demanded federal attention during the winter of 1921-22."

The next fiscal year, 1922-23, was Mr. King's first. And at its close the deputy minister reported as follows: "The fiscal year, regarded industrially, showed a substantial improvement over the period 1921-22. General increased industrial activity practically ended abnormal unemployment."

These are the official records of conditions prior to the King regime and the improvement which ensued.

Herding Instincts.

Is the world becoming afraid of solitude in its mad rush for society and companionship? The social columns of the newspapers and Sunday supplements are rapidly growing in size. Public dance halls, which are more in number and larger in size, are nightly filled to capacity. The theatre prospers. Everywhere one hears of parties, teas, dinners, balls and smokers. The social life of church and school extends over the entire week. The public eating places with their many people, bright lights and music are attracting the nation away from the family dining table. The social instinct in man is manifestly strengthening itself.

Many will agree that solitude and society are both to be cultivated, that those who fear solitude have fallen in life as utterly as those who have not enjoyed the pleasures of human society. It is possible to overdo either, but there is little evidence or danger of the present generation over-cultivating solitude.

ROYAL BACHELOR



The Crown Prince Frederick of Denmark, unlike his fellow royal sportsman, the Prince of Wales, hates the social whirl. Prince Frederick is seen oftener driving in his automobile through the streets of Copenhagen with pet spaniel Erik than he is at any of the royal balls.

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