

could not last. If we do not at the present moment, or in a few months, collect our thoughts, the aftermath may be disastrous. Our industries will be dislocated and in the period of reconstruction which is going to follow the declaration of peace, the country will not be prepared to face the realities which will confront it. The duty, therefore, of the Minister of Trade and Commerce, and of the department over which he presides, is at the present juncture to organize for the future, economically speaking, and to assist in capturing for Canada her legitimate share of the world's markets. My hon. friend threw out the suggestion that we should have a round table conference and give to the questions arising out of that conference our best thoughts. For my part, I can assure the hon. gentleman that he will get my best support in studying the organization of this country in view of the reconstruction period that is to follow the war.

I was, however, rather surprised that in the course of his eloquent and able speech my hon. friend evaded an issue which, it seems to me, should have been foremost in his thoughts. I refer to the preferential trade policy between the Motherland and the dominions. I do not propose to say that I am committing myself to that policy, because I understand that there will be in a short time a conference between the Allies and the dominions, but I would have expected from the hon. gentleman, who has always been a convinced—shall I say a consistent—adherent of the idea and the principle of closer co-operation between the Mother Country and the dominions, that he would have given us the benefit of his views upon that subject. I remember that some years ago my hon. friend delivered in England, perhaps in Scotland, a series of addresses in favour of that policy. I remember that during the last campaign, and since the last campaign on many occasions, the hon. gentleman has been the protagonist of the policy of preferential trade between the Mother Country and the dominions. Let me here express my sincere regret as a Canadian that in the Paris Conference Canada is not to be officially represented by a Canadian. I am in good faith in making this statement. I am not ready to say that I would favour a preferential trade policy as between the dominions and the Mother Country, but I am ready to listen to any reasonable argument upon the question, and

to accept any solution which is favourable to the interests of my country and the Motherland. But, Mr. Speaker, I should have expected that the Canadian Government would have been represented in that conference, and that my hon. friend himself, would have been our delegate. No abler, no more eloquent Canadian could have represented the interests of Canada than the present Minister of Trade and Commerce. Look at what has been done by Australia. The Prime Minister of Australia left his country, crossed the Pacific ocean, went to the United States—

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: He did not touch the United States.

Mr. LEMIEUX: He went to Honolulu.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: And from there to Vancouver.

Mr. LEMIEUX: He went to Honolulu, thus touching United States territory, and there he gave an interview which I read. I followed him very closely from the day he left Australia. He came to Ottawa, and had several conferences with the members of the Cabinet. From here he went to England. Many of the English papers, and perhaps many in the British Government, did not relish the idea of Mr. Hughes asserting his rights as an Australian to represent directly his country at the Paris Conference. But I admire the pluck of the man. He stood to his guns, and to-day he is the accredited representative of his country at the Paris Conference. True he goes to Paris as an Imperial Privy Councillor, but will not he represent the interests of his country at the Paris Conference more than the interests of Great Britain? Yes. And our country, so proud—our country, the largest and the oldest of the overseas dominions—our country which took such a prominent share in the establishment of the Colonial Conferences, will not be represented. My hon. friend (Sir George Foster), or the Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden), or at least our representative in London, Sir George Perley, should have directly represented Canada at that conference. But be that as it may, I was surprised that in his remarks bearing on the development of the trade of this country my hon. friend should have avoided speaking of the question which is engaging the attention of his electors in Toronto, of a large number of the people of the province of Ontario, and a large section of the Canadian community generally, namely, the