

I should like to direct a few remarks now to the general principles of the agreement. I particularly object to the clause which binds subsequent parliaments to tariffs high or low, or binds us to anything of that description. If it is right to do that for five or ten years, why not for twenty years? Why not perpetuate parliament? Why not pass a law to the effect that the present government may stay in power until they die of old age or ineptitude? If it is right to do these things, it is right to extend them a little. We can change the laws that have been passed concerning internal matters, but we cannot when they deal with outside nations; we cannot repudiate treaties.

Another vital objection I have is that British tariffs still stand too high. In this connection let me quote the Post, which is by no means an anti-government paper:

In other words have the reductions in British tariff been small and disappointing compared to the increases in the general tariffs on many items?

That is what the Post says,—not lowered, as Mr. Baldwin so eloquently pleaded for. I stated last year, and am so reported in *Hansard*, that I would be in favour of an empire conference not so much for itself, but because I thought it would lead to a world conference and a world reduction in tariffs, which, by the way, was so strongly recommended by the League of Nations. Last year I pointed out that each nation was simply building higher walls around itself, trying to grab or steal a little from its neighbour, and not increasing the aggregate trade one iota. I predicted then and I predict now that we would have five groups, namely the British Empire, Europe, the United States, South America and the orient each combined together, five groups bucking each other to grab the trade, trying to steal trade from each other, instead of thirty or forty countries doing it as they are doing it today. Already there has been a *zollverein* started in Europe taking in six or eight prominent nations. We want more, not less trade; we want a policy which will stimulate and not hinder trade.

Now, here is what Mr. Baldwin states:

Let us therefore aim at the lowering rather than the raising of barriers, even if we cannot fully achieve our purpose now, and let us remember that any action we take here is bound to have its reactions elsewhere.

Then, here is what *The Economist* says:

Where the real failure of Ottawa lies is in the total absence of any vindication of the truth that economic progress is to be sought in the general lowering of tariff values.

[Mr. Neill.]

Everything which interferes with universal trade is so much to the bad. Then, here is what Lord Hailsham states:

We have made it plain that we regard excessive restrictions on international trade as an international evil and we have made it plain that we in the empire are going to set an example in trading to get rid of that evil.

Something happened in this chamber to prevent his carrying out that most desirable object. What it was is perhaps for some one else to say. Last spring when I went home I was asked my opinion concerning the conference and I stated that an Imperial economic conference would be all right, but that there should be a world conference to deal with the abandonment of reparations, the world wide abolition of tariffs—except in a small way for revenue purposes—and to stabilize monetary world-wide currency. I was pleased to hear the hon. member for North Bruce (Mr. Malcolm) the other day use almost the same words.

Another quotation from a British newspaper states:

But if a tariff ring is to be put around the empire as Mr. Bennett desires, Washington is likely to demand the payment of \$50,000,000 of war debt due in December,—which would mean new economies and new taxes.

I believe the world's salvation lies in a world conference. Much of the success of such a conference would depend upon the spirit in which we approached it. Certainly the harmony within the conference would not be helped if the British Empire placed around itself a wall excluding trade from the United States. Nor would it help the harmony of such a gathering to have our Prime Minister boasting that foreign nations will pay tribute to the British empire. I do not like that word "tribute." It reminds me of the days of the Caesars, a time when the historian said, "At that time all the world paid tribute to Caesar." The Prime Minister would need only to get himself a toga, appear seated on his pinnacle of power and say, Caesar-like: "All the foreign nations must pay tribute to us." I hope he will say, "us" and not "me." But, Mr. Speaker, paying tribute to the Caesars has gone out of date. That may have been done two thousand years ago, but we do not act like that nowadays. That is a very poor motto to inscribe on our portals when friendly nations come hoping to arrange friendly trade agreements.

It is regrettable that the treaties are not open to alteration. In one of *Nellie McClung's* novels the heroine is a little girl whose father drank himself to death. The publican who was supposed to be responsible