

idea. If my hon. friend looks over the agreement made between the Canadian delegates and the delegates from the West Indies, he will see that the proposition in sub-section (b) does not come into that agreement at all. The agreement made between the West Indian Islands and Canada was for a ten-year period continuance of a certain preference, which was four-fifths of the duty falling upon goods coming from any foreign country. That was all in so far as preference is concerned, and relates to what is included in the agreement between Canada and the West Indies. What is in sub-section (b) is simply what we have put in by way of good will, by way of grace, if you wish to put it that way; we had no idea of depriving them of the British preference in so far as it had heretofore applied and might hereafter apply to the goods coming in from the West Indian Islands, we say so and there in a section of the Bill, for which there is no compulsion at all, and for which there is no claim in the agreement itself. My hon. friend says: how can we tell what is to be the preference that the West Indian Islands get unless you tell us more about this British preference? Let my hon. friend look at sub-section (a). Why does he not make the same claim there? There is a four-fifths duty, defined in exactly the same way that the definition is made in sub-section (b), defined in the only way in which it can be defined.

Mr. MACDONALD: Except that if you lower the preference—

Mr. FOSTER: If you are going to take the standards of duty as they exist for British and foreign countries, in may have varying rates of duty. A change may take place a year from now or two years from now, but four-fifths will be the proportion of that rate, whatever the changes are; this is the only way you can fix it, unless you go to work and fix your foreign tariffs as well as your British preferential tariff for every year of the succeeding ten years, and then put in definite figures; that is the only way you can do it except by this way. Why does not my hon. friend say: we want to know what you are going to put on goods coming from foreign countries in the next ten years; are you going to change those duties or keep them the same as they are at present? One demand is just as strong as the other, and neither of them can be admitted. I think my hon. friend sees that quite well. All this discussion that has been going on between my hon. friends and myself may be very excellent fooling, or it may be very foolish fooling; but when you come right down to common sense I think both my hon. friends see that they have been asking what they have a perfect right to ask, but which I do not think is germane to this at all. If we were

Mr. FOSTER (N. Toronto).

putting through at this time a tariff measure which affected Great Britain herself, then with reference to the preferential tariff these questions would be germane. We are not doing so; that question is not raised in this at all, in any way, shape or form. Sub-section (b) is simply put in by way of good will to the other part which fixed the duty as regards foreign duties; both of them are indefinite in amount, but clear and fixed in proportion. Take the tariff as it exists to-day and you can define it in definite terms. As to how it may stand five years from now, you have got to wait to see what that tariff is before you can define the preference in sub-section (a) or sub-section (b) in actual figures.

Mr. PUGSLEY: It seems to me that my hon. friend has given an absolutely good reason why he should answer the questions.

Mr. FOSTER: I am afraid by trying to give information I am getting into further trouble.

Mr. PUGSLEY: My hon. friend has said, if this was an agreement affecting our trade with Great Britain, then he would be obliged to give the information as to the policy of the Government regarding British preference. When you bear in mind that this country does not necessarily give to the West Indies the preference which is given to Great Britain, that we can give a preference to Great Britain if we like, without giving it to the British West Indies, then surely, when we are making an agreement with the West Indies and when we propose to give to them a preference of thirty-three and a third per cent, it is just as proper that the Minister of Trade and Commerce should give us information with regard to the continuance of that preference or as to the policy of the Government with regard to the continuance of that preference, as if this was a treaty direct with the Mother Country. My hon. friend must see this.

Mr. FOSTER: I do not see it.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Does my hon. friend take it that we are bound to give this preference of thirty-three and a third per cent to the West Indies because we give it to Great Britain? That is not the case. We can give it to Great Britain without giving it to a single one of the British colonies. This Parliament gave it to the colonies, because it was thought advisable to do so. Here is an agreement where there was no agreement before; it is an agreement to which the West Indies and Canada are parties. Under that agreement the West Indies give to Canada a preference of twenty per cent and twenty per cent only; but by that same agreement we not only give to the West Indies a preference of twenty per cent, but my hon. friend, as he