

I put to the house and the country this query: Could any Canadian worthy of the name, at a conference such as that, say less? Could any Canadian say less than that his first duty and obligation was to the country that sent him there, that had honoured him with its confidence and support? He would go further and say that we hoped to work out plans that would be advantageous to us and the other parts of the empire, at the same time realizing that we must not shut the doors in any way to reciprocal world trade, for every man knows that must be so. If it had then ended, there might have been some force in the observations made last night by the former Prime Minister. But did he tell the house yesterday during that long four-hour speech what attitude was taken by the prime ministers of the other self-governing dominions of the empire?

Then in his endeavour to make a failure of this conference that will be held in Ottawa this fall, in his endeavour to destroy any possibility this government might have of success in that regard, what did he do? He tried to fasten upon the representative of his own country blame that did not attach to him unless it attached to every prime minister of every other dominion of the British empire.

Mr. Scullin, the Prime Minister of Australia, followed me. I had spoken first, as the representative of the senior dominion. What did Mr. Scullin say?

I entirely agree with Mr. Bennett that we must come to some decision on that principle. Already that principle has been conceded. Already there is a measure of preference in operation reciprocally between the dominions and the United Kingdom. Already there are treaties in existence between certain dominion governments. We have accepted to a large extent the principle of preference, but it is our duty at this conference first of all to affirm the maintenance of that principle and the extension of its operation.

He then took up in detail a consideration of the various measures which his own country had passed and dealt with the preferences that were enjoyed by Australia in the British market. Then he said:

I have outlined in broad principle what Australia is prepared to do, and what I believe we at this conference ought to agree to do. If those principles are accepted, I suggest that a committee of this conference be formed, when I shall be prepared to suggest in detail proposals to give practical effect to this policy of economic cooperation.

That is what Mr. Scullin said. He was followed by Mr. Forbes, the Prime Minister of New Zealand. Mr. Forbes, at very great length, and with figures, dealt with the whole situation, and at the end he arrived at his conclusion. These are his words at page 107:

As a first step, I cannot too strongly urge that the representatives of the United Kingdom—

Note, the representatives of the United Kingdom, not the representatives of his own country, not the representatives of his own government or of his own people. He continued:

As a first step, I cannot too strongly urge that the representatives of the United Kingdom should seriously consider the provision of some adequate assistance to the languishing industries of this country, and this, in my opinion, can be afforded effectively by tariff protection against the "dumping" of the surplus products of other countries whose tariff walls prevent the free flow of trade and against the competition of imported goods, often on an unfair basis and invariably on terms of advantage as compared with the article produced in the United Kingdom.

He went a step further. Mr. Forbes went on to say:

As a second step, I feel that a tariff preference in this country in favour of empire products (including foodstuffs), accompanied by increased preference in favour of British goods in the overseas empire, would be the greatest single factor in increasing inter-imperial trade. It is my view that trade within the empire must play, in the future, a far more important part in the economics of the commonwealth than ever in the past, and the utmost effort should be made to foster and increase the sentiment in favour of the purchase of empire goods.

So you have Australia and New Zealand behind Canada.

Then Mr. Havenga, Minister of Finance for the Union of South Africa, also made his statement, in terms somewhat stronger. He said:

The remedy must, so far as the Union is concerned be looked for in directions outside free trade, and we are willing and anxious to explore every avenue to that end.

The question appears to be capable of being stated very simply; Great Britain, with her industrial difficulties, seeks markets for her manufactures in the dominions, while the dominions, in their agricultural troubles, are anxious to extend their markets in Great Britain for their produce.

He went on and discussed at length the various items which he thought should be considered by the committee.

Then came the representative of the Irish Free State, Mr. McGilligan. He put his position very frankly before the gathering by saying that so far as the economic situation was concerned, the Irish Free State would have to consider each problem as it arose because of its geographical relation to the United Kingdom. He speaks of that under the heading, *The Relation of Geographical Factors to Economic Policy*, and as a matter of fact he shortly afterwards put into force the principle there alluded to