

approached in such a manner we have to look for other explanations, and that one seems to many, the most plausible of any.

I come now to the proposals themselves. The method of approach was bad enough; the proposals were even worse. The proposals were of a character that could not possibly be entertained by the government in office in Great Britain to-day, or by any government that might be formed there at the present time. I think I shall be able to make that clear. I hope this country will get a true appreciation of what these proposals were. Up to the present time the people for the most part, do not understand just what it was my right hon. friend proposed to the British government, because he sought to befog the whole matter with the use he made of the acceptance of the so-called principle of the preference.

One point I hope I have already made clear, with respect to my hon. friend's proposal is that they were peremptory in their character. Let me quote a few of the phrases that appeared in the presentation of the proposals to the British government: "This market we want," "subscribe without delay", "must approve or reject", "a time for plain speaking", "the day is now at hand", "decide once and for all", "further discussion ..... is .....unnecessary", "time for action", "deliberations must be governed by the time factor", "change.....must be made without undue delay", "the time is now at hand when the doctrine must be embraced", "I await your decision." These are samples of the persuasive methods adopted by my right hon. friend in his now-or-never, take-it-or-leave-it attitude at the Imperial conference.

Let me give the exact terms of the proposals. I wish to do my hon. friend full justice, and therefore I will read the proposals in his own words. They are very simple; to understand them aright there are three paragraphs which must be read together. The proposal first of all was to grant a preference in the Canadian market by an increase in the tariff of 10 per cent; on condition of a similar increase in the British tariff. Next, the basis on which the proposal was made was adequate protection for all industries in Canada. The Prime Minister went on to explain elsewhere that by "adequate protection" he meant that anything that could be produced or manufactured in this country should be produced and manufactured here and in no way subjected to competition from without. In the third place he laid down the doctrine that the principle of preference must be accepted. That, as it stands, sounds very plausible. But when one examines his words, it will be seen

that what he meant by the principle of preference, what the public understood he meant and what most of the hon. members of this house even now understand, I venture to say, as having been meant by "preference" is not at all what my hon. friend had in mind. He had reference to a brand of preference of his own, fashioned deliberately in a manner which made it wholly impossible of acceptance by the British government.

In order to give the Prime Minister's exact words let me quote the proposal:

I offer to the mother country and to all the other parts of the empire a preference in the Canadian market in exchange for a like preference in theirs, based upon the addition of a 10 per centum increase in prevailing general tariffs or upon tariffs yet to be created. In the universal acceptance of this offer, and in like proposals and acceptances by all the other parts of the empire, we attain to the ideal of empire preference.

Now, as to the basis on which the offer is made, the paragraph immediately following amplifies and explains the offer. It is as follows:

I amplify and explain this offer in the following ways. In the first place, the rate I have mentioned cannot be uniformly applied. The basis of the proposal is the adequate protection to industries now existent or yet to be established. Because of this we must ensure a certain flexibility in the preferential tariff having regard to the fundamental need for stability in trade conditions, and must take account of such prevailing preferences as are now higher than the general one I suggested.

Then the principle of preference is to be approved of. The offer thus amplified is conditioned upon the acceptance of an empire preference, the nature of which is more or less apparent from the offer as explained. It was referred to at the outset as acceptance of the principle of preference, and I have already read the language in which this condition was set forth. I shall not repeat it in full but will extract the essential paragraphs:

And so I propose that we of the British Empire, in our joint and several interests, do subscribe to the principle of an empire preference and that we take without delay the steps necessary to put it into effective operation. . . .

First we must approve or reject the principle. . . .

Until this principle is accepted, it would be profitless to discuss the application of it in any great detail.

The offer, therefore, reduces itself to three simple propositions or terms, each of which must be taken in conjunction with the other. Here is the whole offer in a nutshell: it is an offer of a preference in the Canadian market, first of all in exchange for a like preference, based upon the addition of a 10 per cent increase in the prevailing general tariffs or upon