

*The Address—Mr. Mackenzie King*

ment, which does play some part in public affairs, particularly where it relates to matters affecting the British Empire. Anything that will make for closer cooperation between the various parts of the empire should receive, and certainly always has received from the Liberal party, the very strongest approval. Before attending an imperial conference in Britain in 1897, at the time of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier introduced through the then Minister of Finance the first measure of preference that was brought into this parliament. The other motive was the one that every nation must have in mind primarily, namely, its own interest. When this country adopted the preference it did so because it was believed by the administration of the day that it was good business so to do, and every administration that has remained in office in Canada since then, whether Conservative or Liberal, except the administration of which my right hon. friend is the head, has maintained the preference at the figure at which it stood at the time the administration came into office, or else increased it. So that there has been a pretty general agreement that it was good business to give a preference to Britain. Now it did not mean that by giving a preference to British goods we were simply helping Britain. My right hon. friend put forward that point of view in opposition to an increase in the preference at the last general campaign. He came forward with his so-called doctrine of Canada First, as though there were, in matters of trade, which means an exchange that is mutually advantageous, something to the disadvantage of Canada, because Britain might receive some advantage from the arrangement. That is where I differ so completely from my right hon. friend. Trade, to my mind, is an exchange which in the very nature of things is of mutual advantage. There would be no such thing as trade at all unless each party to the exchange felt that it was to its interest to trade. My right hon. friend takes the view that trade is rather in the nature of economic war and that we have to fight and bargain over the arrangement that is to be made before two countries can do what it is to their mutual interest to do. This, then, is the point of view from which the Liberal party, so far as it has any expression of view in the matter, will approach the forthcoming imperial economic conference. We will welcome it as a conference which we trust will lead to much more in the way of empire trade, to much more in the way of preference on the part of this country towards Britain and towards

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the other dominions, and, where they have tariffs, more in the way of preference on their part towards us. But I do say to the Prime Minister that if the imperial economic conference is to be the success which this country wishes it to be he will have to change his point of view in regard to trade.

Moreover, he will have to change his methods of dealing with other parts of the British Empire, and he will have to change his policies. I have touched for a moment upon the right hon. gentleman's point of view; let me say a word about his methods. We are looking forward to this economic conference in the hope that it may be a success. Why was the last economic conference not a success? I have already given my view in the house and I repeat it to-night: I think it was because of the attitude of my right hon. friend, because of the way in which he approached that conference, the way in which, before he left Canada at all, at the special session of this parliament, he put up duties against Great Britain and other parts of the empire, doing away with a large measure of the preference they formerly had, and, when he reached England, telling them they must accept what he wanted to have done or he would not be prepared to listen to anything. I do not want to go over the ground I traversed pretty fully a year ago, but, lest anyone may have forgotten what my right hon. friend did say, let me read one paragraph in relation to what he termed his offer to Great Britain. This was after having stated his Canada First policy, the Canada First policy being that whatever can be produced or manufactured in Canada must be produced or manufactured here. Under his Canada First policy, tariff walls were to be so arranged that it would be impossible for goods of the kind mentioned to come into this dominion above those walls from outside, whether from other parts of the empire or from other countries. Preference was to be given by raising the tariff wall against other countries still higher than it was against those to which the preference was to be given. After he had stated his Canada First policy, the right hon. gentleman at the conference said:

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 ten per centum increase in prevailing general tariffs or upon tariffs yet to be created.

That is the proposition which the Right Hon. Mr. Thomas very properly described as humbug, and I am afraid my right hon. friend will have to get rid of his humbug