

*The Address—Mr. Laurin*

one whose mind had been strengthened by contact with the most difficult problems, inflexible also to the power of an inflexible will, broadmindedness, patience and tolerance which could rally all views.

The Right Hon. Stanley Baldwin stated:

Over that conference it was fitting that the Prime Minister of Canada should preside, and fortunate have we been that in Canada's Prime Minister we have a man so admirably qualified for that difficult task. He possesses a driving power given to few, which is an essential element in the conduct of business of this kind. He has a grasp of detail which is astonishing, and yet with all, when one realizes what a grasp of details involves.

And he further added:

I have been struck all the time by his accessibility, that he has always been ready to discuss points as they arise with any delegation at any hour and in any place." It is a rare quality, which is seldom met in great men, and I think I am expressing the views of my colleagues; that never have we come in contact with him without being impressed with the power of his personality and the facility of his accessibility.

This Imperial conference which was holding for the first time, its sittings outside of England, and which we had the great honour of welcoming in Canada proved to the entire world the solid unity of the community of the nations which comprises it and the joint interest of trade and spirit which actuates the empire. However, it would have seemed very strange indeed had this conference, comprising so many individuals with such diversity of views, not felt the shock of dissensions, we therefore have the Right Hon. Mr. Baldwin giving us briefly a true picture of these dissenting views, when he stated:

We were met with blue sky and sunshine, and we have had a great deal of that. We have also had storms, we have had thunder and lightning and we have very nearly been washed out. However, there was to be found fortunately in this gathering a man with a personality both prolific and creative of deeds, who could bring to bear, on our somewhat weakened efforts, the courage and perseverance necessary to unite the scattered forces and whip them into a concrete whole.

Mr. Stanley Bruce expressed the same idea, when he stated:

Let me assure you, Mr. Bennett, that we all bear witness that by your genial and forceful personality you have been the mainspring of this conference, and we all recognize that the success that has been achieved has been due in very great measure to the guidance you have given it in presiding over all that has been done and said. But your work has not stopped there, for after all, in a conference of this kind the work is not mainly done in the formal meetings but in association outside, and in informal

[Mr. Laurin.]

meetings and discussions. There you have played a great part and we are all deeply grateful to you.

We have gathered here to approve the work of those who, at very trying moments, made enormous sacrifices to lay the foundation upon which we and future generations will have the opportunity of erecting an edifice as useful and stable as it is possible to realize.

The following is what Mr. Baldwin had to say:

We have learned more than we have ever learned before of each other's difficulties and each other's point of view. It only remains for us to try to work out in practice what we have achieved on paper, with that sanity and that forbearance which I know will always characterize the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations and then it may well be that the generations that come after in speaking of us may say "indeed they builded better than they knew."

It is but fair and reasonable, sir, for everyone present to bring to the statesman who so worthily represented us with all the power of his energy, the loyal support of our cooperation and approval both practical and real so that these overtures hardly broached may become for us and future generations a source of inspiration forever increasing and spreading in order that we may hold in the midst of this new union and the whole world the position to which we are entitled, a striking example of strength and constructive energy. To this end, sir, it behooves us to examine briefly this evolution of new ideals which have cropped up among the nations making up the British commonwealth so as to clearly grasp the duties which are inherent to our cooperation and approval.

The conference was held in order to lay the foundation of an economic policy by which England and the sister nations could expand their trade. It seemed impossible that the dominions, young nations essentially protectionists, would consent to endorse England's free-trade policy of the past, while, on the other hand, these nations having just reached their manhood and proud of their national autonomy could hardly expect that England, for ever so long a free-trading nation would forsake a policy which, in the last century, had been the means of securing to her a dominant position in the world's trade development.

However, the economic difficulties by which all nations are beset, including England and the dominions, have proved to the delegates the necessity that the conference should not serve for business transactions between countries having selfish aims as their object, but