

States can greatly assist in the promotion of United Kingdom exports by simply getting out of their way, by removing or substantially lessening the obstructions which we and our neighbours have deliberately placed in the channels of British trade. I refer of course, as you must know, to our sky-high tariffs, to our quotas and prohibitions, and to the administrative bog holes which we maintain against imports from Britain at the instance of pressure groups within our own countries who quite naturally would avoid the effort necessary to meet British competition.

In the wordy joint communique of the Anglo-American-Canadian conference, issued in Washington on the 12th instant, there appears this paragraph:

Canadian representatives stated that the Canadian government would undertake a further review of the administrative operation of its Customs Act in the light of these discussions. As to tariff rates, it was noted that high tariffs were clearly inconsistent with the position of credit countries.

"The administrative operation" of the Customs Act is the tangle-foot with which officialdom is able to bedevil foreign trade enterprise at the instance of pressure groups within our own borders, and I am glad to see that its existence is admitted and that there is some suggestion of amelioration. But I note with regret that there is not even a suggestion of trade or tariff concessions for the purpose of keeping alive a British trade which is vital to our own economy and to our progress as a nation—almost as vital to us as it is to Britain—although the communique does acknowledge, as I have already observed, that high tariffs are inconsistent with the position of credit countries.

Well, honourable senators, both houses of parliament are now in session, and the budget, I presume, is being prepared. The sincerity of Canada's desire for the solution of Britain's trade difficulties may, I submit, be judged by how substantially we ease our tariff barriers against British imports. That is all I will say about our own ability to increase the trade by taking barriers out of its way. The other solution, which I said lay in the hands of Britain rather than of Canada, is in the matter of competitive price.

Hon. Mr. Lesage: Before my honourable friend goes on to that second point, may I ask a question? My impression is that we could increase importations from Britain if we bought British coal. About twenty-five or thirty years ago we used to purchase large quantities of British coal in this country, but now we do not get any. I remember reading in the papers last winter that even the English people themselves were running short of coal, because the miners did not want to

work. I do not know whether that statement about the miners is true, and in any event I am not blaming them, but am simply referring to a statement that I read.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I thank the honourable gentleman for bringing up that point. It is very true that our importations of British coal have greatly declined. I do not wish to detain the house too long in a discussion which, of course, could go on for hours, and I will answer the question as the senator from Inkerman replied to a somewhat similar point last night: I am not an expert in picayune points of trade—and by "picayune" I do not mean unimportant. No member of this chamber attempts to bring here a memorized list of the prohibitions to be found in the tariff schedules, but that does not prevent us from dealing in general terms with the principles involved. It may be that, when the schedules are under review, a percentage of decrease in tariffs would be the wiser method of dealing with the problem. Perhaps there should be a percentage of decrease all across the board with respect to imports from Britain, or it may be that the decrease in rates should be greater on some items than on others. Personally, I am in philosophy a free trader. The senator from Inkerman said last night that something must be done, even if somebody gets hurt. I would say that something must be done even though those special privileges and advantages which we have extended to certain individuals in the past have to be decreased.

I was leaving that wing of my subject and about to switch my thought to the control which exists in Britain rather than here. By way of preliminary observation I may say that one hears continually of the expenses of social services maintained by the present government in Britain, where one can receive spectacles free, if he needs them, and where a doctor will look at your tongue without charging you for it.

Hon. Mr. Quinn: If you wait long enough.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: If you wait long enough, yes. Well, the net cost of those services does not appear to me to be very important. Although I am not socialistically inclined, as honourable senators know, I am in favour of many social services which are maintained in this country, as well as in Britain, and which are necessary to the well-being of individual citizens.

However that may be, I want to call the attention of my fellow members to the fact that in our papers and discussions we never find a single reference to the atrociously high rents that prevail in the United Kingdom, or to the curse of land monopoly which blights