

markets. He urged that, at a time when Great Britain was imposing a tax, she should give us a preference in return for the preference we had given her. That attitude was vastly different from the one taken by my right hon. friend at the last Imperial economic conference, when he urged that Britain must change her fiscal policy and impose taxes before we would cooperate with her. Sir Wilfrid Laurier always said he felt perfectly sure that any time Great Britain changed her fiscal policy and as a consequence imposed customs duties, she might be depended upon to give Canada a voluntary preference, just as Canada had given her a preference. So I believe she will act, and so I am sure the people of Canada generally believe she will act. If in that spirit we enter into negotiations with the mother country, I think we may expect of the coming conference a large measure of increase in trade within the empire, together with a strengthening of inter-imperial cooperation and inter-imperial good-will.

So far as the Liberal party is concerned, that is the objective we hope may be realized as a consequence of the forthcoming conference. We trust the conference will serve as an important factor in the increase of trade between different parts of the empire, and particularly between Great Britain and Canada. Along with that we trust it will mark the beginning of a closer cooperation in many directions among all parts of the empire, and will point the way, let us hope, to a reduction in tariffs by the other countries of the world, and to a beginning as well, so far as Canada is concerned, of more in the way of trade with all other nations.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

After Recess

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, much of the debate to which we have listened, including the speech this afternoon, would seem to indicate that there is no appreciation by the opposition of the fact that we are in the midst of a world crisis. After listening to the address this afternoon one would think that we were in the ordinary, humdrum existence of fairly good times and that the old story, revamped, was being told again; that Industry and Humanity was once more to be quoted and the four points therein enunciated made known to the public again; that these tales which the people have grown weary of hearing were to be revamped and retold as if we were in the midst of ordinary circumstances,

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

and that conditions in this world had not changed from those normal conditions under which parliament meets.

Well, sir, we are in the midst of the greatest crisis the world has ever seen. Most of us have done some reading with respect to these matters, and we have formed definite understandings and convictions as to the situation. I suppose some books make a greater impression upon our minds than others, depending to a large extent upon our appreciation of the opportunity the author may have had to study the problems at first hand and indicate as soundly as might be possible a general summary of conditions. The gentleman who for ten years was economic adviser of the League of Nations, and whose name is known to all within sound of my voice, expressed himself a few months ago with respect to existing conditions, in these words:

Then came the depression. In intensity and in range beyond all previous experience, with a duration and with subversive consequences which none can yet with confidence forecast.

Proceeding further, he uses these words:

The first thing that is overwhelmingly clear is that this is a world depression in the fullest sense. It is world wide in the range of its effects; its causes, however originated, are clearly related to defects in the world system; and there is the strongest presumption that such remedial measures as may be possible will require the concerted action of many countries.

That is the firm and considered conviction of one who, having had perhaps greater opportunities than any other through being in the very centre of the world movement, is able to express an opinion of value. But I submit that any stranger coming to this house and sitting in the gallery for the last few weeks, or hearing the address this afternoon, would be wholly unconscious of the fact that the great currents that move the world are out of course, that conditions have changed and we are face to face with the greatest crisis of which there is any record whatever.

To-night I venture to direct attention to the fact that we are dealing with realities and not with theories, and that those who have been charged with responsibility for the administration of government during the last few months have had placed upon them a responsibility greater than has fallen on most governments in this country. I go further and say this, that it is quite apparent that this fact is being understood more and more by the people of this country. When the right hon. gentleman proceeds to give advice in that ponderous fashion which is his own, and when he undertakes to tell us how we should conduct the business of this country, I can