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Cell: last speech from the Throne

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cule and misrepresent the effect of the policies which the then administration had put into operation and which had a very far-reaching bearing upon what might be possible at the time of the imperial conference. Standing where I am standing to-day, and then in opposition, my hon. friend said, in the address on the speech from the throne in the earlier part of this year, that no government had a right to go to the imperial conference without first obtaining a mandate from the people of Canada. A little later in the year—with not quite the same emphasis, it is true—when the Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Charles Dunning, had brought down his budget, my hon. friend repeated the statement that there ought to be a mandate from the people before any government should represent this country at the imperial conference. So important were the issues, so important was the bearing of the policies of that budget upon what might take place at the imperial conference.

I ask my hon. friend, when he gets up to speak, to tell us what mandate he has from the Canadian people with respect to the imperial conference. Will he tell us what his mandate is? We are interested in knowing; the country is interested in knowing what his attitude is going to be at the imperial conference. They want to know what are the policies that he is going to propound there which will be helpful in the solution of the unemployment problem in this country. We made it very clear to the people of Canada that as far as the marketing of western grain was concerned, what might or might not be possible would depend very much upon the result of the recent election, having the bearing that it did upon the important policies embodied in the Dunning budget. We felt that had those policies been endorsed we would have been in a position at the council table in London to have pointed to the generous and friendly attitude which the people of Canada had taken towards Britain, an attitude which we believed meant very much in the way of developing future trade between this country and the old land and all parts of the British Empire, but whatever we said in that regard was met by my hon. friend by some reference to "Canada first." "Canada first", he said, whenever the British preference was mentioned, as though both countries did not stand to gain in all matters of trade; as though the British preference, which was first introduced by Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, had not served the interests of Canada as well as the interests of Great Britain; as though the British preference had not been

maintained as a policy by his predecessors in office, by every government that has been in power from that day to this, and as though the question of the British preference was not likely to be an all important question at the imperial conference in England this year.

My hon. friend seems to have very little faith in voluntary agreements. Let me say to him that when he goes to London I think he will find that the only things he will be able to accomplish or that any government will be able to accomplish in the matter of trade as between the different countries of the British Empire will be by voluntary agreement, by cooperation. He will find it very difficult to get very far along on any other path.

Does my hon. friend believe he has a mandate from the Canadian people to-day to blast his way into the British market? Is that the mandate he has? What is the position? Is he, in the measures he is about to bring down, to increase the tariff against Britain as well as against other countries? That was the statement he made, that he was going to put up the tariff against Britain as well as against other countries. Is that the step he proposes to take in advance of proceeding to an imperial economic conference? Does he believe he is going to strengthen his hand in that fashion?

After making his speech about blasting his way into the markets of the world, my hon. friend when taken to task said that after all it was not blasting he meant so much as it was blazing, that it was not the warrior attitude so much as the crusader attitude which he was adopting, that all he was claiming was to be first in the long line of great men who have helped blaze the path of Canada and of the empire. Then when he went on to explain what he meant by "blazing", he came to the term "bargaining", and said that some bargaining process was the only way he was going to trade, whether with other parts of the world or with other parts of the British Empire.

What does that mean? According to his own statements it means putting up the tariff in this country, to begin with; that is to be the first part of it, and then on the other hand, so far as the other countries of the British Empire are concerned, it means that they are to be obliged to change their fiscal policies in order to make them accord with the fiscal policies of this country. My hon. friend knows very well that the British Empire is founded on self-government, and that as far as self-government is concerned, it means autonomy in everything and in nothing more

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

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