

ment. Everything that is essential to what is before the House is really in the possession of members.

Mr. OLIVER: I do not wish to hold the House at all, but I think my hon. friend's statement is rather extreme when he says that the report of the negotiations is not something that would be of value in informing the House with regard to the conclusions arrived at. While I do not wish to suggest delay in the discussion, I would ask my hon. friend to be considerate of those of us who have not had the opportunity which has been afforded to others if we ask for information which otherwise we might have had by simply studying the report.

Mr. FOSTER: I did have some copies of my own and I gave them, as far as they went, to hon. gentlemen on the other side. I am sorry that I have not more.

Mr. OLIVER: I am aware of that.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN (Halifax): Before the second reading of the Bill is passed, I desire to make a few observations, and I am impelled to do so by reason of statements which have been made publicly by hon. gentlemen opposite respecting this Bill rather than by reason of the provisions to the West India agreement which is before us for ratification. As the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce has stated, there is very little room for wide difference of opinion respecting this measure as it is practically in the terms of the proposal recommended by the Royal Commission appointed some two or three years ago, upon which commission were two members of the late Government. I am sure that upon this side of the House we welcome any trade or tariff arrangement by which it is possible to make freer trade between any two countries, particularly between Canada and the British West India islands, with which we have had long and very agreeable commercial relations. We, upon this side of the House, would naturally commend the agreement by reason of the fact that we were the pioneers in the development of closer trade relations between Canada and the West Indies and all parts of the Empire. I shall go further and say that had it not been for the tariff policy of the late Government in respect to the British preferential tariff accorded to British colonies throughout the world, it would not have been possible to have consummated the agreement which is now before the House.

The friends of hon. gentlemen opposite and the press supporting them, I find, since the making of the West India agreement, were too eager to accord to themselves the entire credit for the treaty. It was stated by friends of the Government

when the negotiations were in progress between the Government and the West Indian delegates about a year ago, that such efforts for reciprocal trade agreements with the West Indies was more preferable than the efforts which had been made by the previous Administration to consummate some tariff agreement with the United States. We were told in express words, that this West Indian-Canadian treaty would be the means of again strengthening the Empire which had been seriously threatened by the proposed reciprocal tariff arrangements with the United States.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce visited England last year and on one occasion he was the guest of an association which is called in England the West India committee. This committee represents largely the proprietors of the sugar cane industry in the West Indies. The minister was the special guest of that committee on this occasion. It was said to him by his hosts that he was responsible for this Canada-West India agreement, and while I must say in justice to him that he thrust that crown aside, still blushing he said that he had sown the seeds many, many years ago, that they had taken root, that they had been growing in the meanwhile under the care of others; the result being this particular agreement. I wish to give to the House just one extract from the remarks made by that hon. gentleman on that occasion. I do not think that I need apologise to the House for referring to this matter. After the hon. gentleman, as I have already observed, claimed that some credit was due him for the consummation of the treaty and that it was always a consummation devoutly to be wished so far as he was concerned, he referred to the report of the Royal Commission on this subject and proceeded to say:

Their's was an invaluable report—

Referring to the Royal Commission report.

—and it laid the foundation for the present agreement. But other things intervened and the Administration which preceded us laid this arrangement in a pigeon-hole and took up another policy which they thought much better for Canada and much better all round. In the hurry and bustle of the new and large question the West Indian matter was laid aside and I am only telling the naked truth when I say that if the verdict of September 21 last had been different from what it was, there would have been no West Indian treaty.

The inference is, the dissolution of the Empire and the extinction of Canada would have followed. I particularly rise to speak on the second reading of this Bill to protest against that statement. It was untrue, misleading and unworthy of any man occu-