

have only served to make them immeasurably worse. Meanwhile I very much fear that on the continent of Europe, as well as in the motherland, his blatant avowal of "Canada first" will bring about a policy of "Canada last" with the nations thus penalized, when it comes to buying foodstuffs.

Canadians had been hoping for further markets for Canadian agricultural products, but the chill which succeeded the warmth of enthusiasm leading up to the conference is too manifest to need any comment. Much greater trade with Britain is imperative to restore our usual prosperity. As Ramsay MacDonald said:

We are going out for a program of mutual help. Preference is not our formula. Ours is a program of greater interchange of trade.

With a policy of practical free trade how could they give more preference to Canadian goods? The Labour government's trade and tariff policy was expressed boldly and frequently long before the conference was summoned, and no Dominion delegation had any reason for assuming that it would be changed. They had no right to demand or expect any change; that prerogative belongs to the British electors. It was the first duty of the overseas delegates to recognize the fiscal policy of Great Britain as it stands, which has always been the policy recognized, as I have said, by all previous prime ministers of Canada. The present leader of the opposition and his colleagues have always refused to throw Canada on the side of any political party in Great Britain, and until the proceedings of the recent conference this position was accepted as wise, sound and courteous by the statesmen of both political parties in Canada.

Now, however, we have a so-called statesman at the head of affairs who has changed all this kind of thing, one who, when he sniffed the salt water, according to press reports, became so brutally frank that he began roving around seeking all whom he might attack, with the result that Canada is now made to appear hostile to two of the great political parties in Britain which at the last election polled 13,676,614 votes out of a total vote of 22,500,000, the Tory party on that occasion polling less than 8,700,000 votes. Thousands, if not millions, of those voters were opposed to any system of protection.

This was not only an unwarranted interference with the domestic affairs of Great Britain but a grave injustice to the people of Canada, who in the last election voted for no such policy and have no desire to see the present government of Great Britain replaced

[Mr. T. McMillan.]

by a protectionist administration. The present prime minister of Canada while in Great Britain had no right to place them in that false position. More than that, Mr. Speaker, by his attitude at that conference he has forfeited his high position as the representative of the Canadian people in throwing the good name of Canada right into the cauldron of British home politics and demanding as a condition of empire preference that Great Britain must necessarily establish a system of protection against foreign importations, a system which all parties in Great Britain have discarded for well nigh a century.

To all such mischievous propaganda the British chancellor of the exchequer did well to reply in an important speech in which "no protection" was the keynote. The following is the associated press report:

Protection would lead Great Britain into interminable industrial strife and chaos. An unfounded rumour has appeared in the press that the government is considering an all-round 10 per cent import duty for revenue purposes. No government in which I am in charge of the national finances will ever give serious consideration to such a proposal...

If we alone were suffering and all protectionist countries were prosperous there would be a prima facie case for enquiring whether it was our fiscal policy which was responsible for our depression...

The world crisis is temporary. It is driving many people to a state of panic. Before we have a change it must be proved beyond all dispute that the policy we have pursued for the last century is not the best policy for this country...

Introduction of a tariff system into this country would strike at the purity of the political life of this nation. Parliament would become a sink of corruption. Members of parliament would go there not to represent the national interests but pledged to support the selfish interests of particular industries...

Once begin a policy of protection and you are on a slippery slope that leads to a bottomless pit.

I commend these words to every would-be protectionist, because it is the most scathing challenge to the operation of such a policy that I have ever read. Mr. Snowden declared that the imperial preference, vigorously debated in Britain since the opening of the Imperial conference, could only be carried out by a tax on food. The Dominion premiers had made their policy clear; they asked Britain to change her fiscal policy so that preferential rates could be given to produce they sent to Britain.

When the proceedings of the conference were afterwards discussed in the British House of Commons Mr. Snowden again took a hand in the discussion and used language which should be intensely interesting to every Can-