

MR. M. N. CAMPBELL (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the difficulty of holding the attention of the house after its having listened to such an able and inspiring address as that just delivered by the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Irvine). I will admit at the outset that the Australian treaty has been of considerable benefit to Canada. My objection to it is not that it has been a disadvantage to Canada as a whole. I believe it has been an advantage and at the same time I am going to admit that the advantage it has been to industry would be to some extent passed on to agriculture. We might as well admit that, but my objection to it is that it is based upon an entirely wrong principle. I need not go any further than to quote the former leader of the Conservative party, the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen. Speaking in the house in 1925, he told the government that they had secured a good deal for the manufacturers but had asked the farmer to step up to the counter and pay the whole bill. That is the principle upon which the treaty is based, and as the speaker who has just resumed his seat has said, it is to be judged not entirely by the amount of goods we have sold or purchased under the treaty, but by the principle underlying the treaty itself.

It is a matter of considerable congratulation to us in this section of the house that the agricultural industry has apparently come into its own as regards securing prominence in the debates of parliament. I recall away back in 1922 when those of us who sat in this section had considerable difficulty in getting the house to listen to a discussion of farm problems. Farming seemed to be an industry that had been very little considered prior to that time, but the change that has come about since then is illustrated by the fact that the agricultural industry, particularly the dairy part of it, has been given a great deal of prominence especially in the last two or three sessions. In the original draft of the treaty, the one that Canada had drafted and to which Australia agreed, there was an entirely different schedule of duties from the list that finally became law under the treaty. There may have been some objections on this account from the dairy industry, that those changes were made after the treaty had been agreed to by Australia. The particular objections of course from the dairymen are based on the fact that the tariff schedules under the Australian treaty have been extended to New Zealand and it is New Zealand that has been getting most of the advantage so far as the dairy industry is concerned. As I say, however, it is at least a matter for congratu-

lation that the farmer and his industry, agriculture, have been recognized to the extent that they have been in public discussions.

There is a great deal of talk in the three sections of the house as to the farmer's attitude towards the policy of protection. Some hon. members, themselves good protectionists, seem to think it improper, almost immoral, for a farmer to ask for protection. I do not gather that the farmer is asking for protection. For many years we had a discussion in this country and throughout the empire over what we called equality of status. Finally we came to the point where our statesmen boasted that Canada had reached a position of equality of status within the empire and that the different dominions enjoyed that equality. Later, within the last couple of years, a new phrase has been coined—equality of status within Canada particularly as applied to the disposition and ownership of our natural resources. That is about to pass into history by the transfer of the natural resources to the various provinces, but now the farmer is raising another question of equality. He is asking for his industry equality of status within the economic unit. He is asking that the industry of agriculture be recognized and put on the same basis as other industries.

With regard to the question of protection, I am not quite so sure that the average farmer is as idealistic as his parliamentary representatives are. The farmers whom I know, the farmers with whom I discuss these matters, the farmers whom I meet from day to day, are intensely practical men. They are realists. The average farmer realizes that theorizing and philosophizing will not milk his cows in the morning, will not put his seed into the ground or take off his crop. He realizes that prayers without work will not secure him a good crop, and as I say he is an intensely practical man. What the farmer is asking for in connection with this question of protection is that there be no discrimination against him. He finds when he has to buy a pair of boots or shoes, an automobile, a motor truck, woollen or cotton clothing, hardware or the ordinary necessities of life, he pays a tariff duty of from ten to thirty-five per cent, but when he offers his own products for sale on the market he has to compete with the outside on a free trade basis. I am not saying whether the farmer is right or wrong; there may be a difference of opinion about that. I am stating how I find the average farmer looking at these matters. I am simply stating the fact. The hon. member for Nelson (Mr. Bird) yesterday seemed to be rather shocked that the farmer was taking this stand. I am not