

view would have been much better served if, in selecting the representation for that delegation, the Prime Minister had sought out persons representative of all parties in this country, persons who would be among the most informed on questions of disarmament and best able to speak for all political parties in Canada. However, as I say, subject to this criticism—which of course has no bearing upon the efforts which we know will be made by the present delegation—we all hope and pray that Canada's representation at Geneva will be able to further the great end which it is intended to serve.

The next reference in the speech from the throne is to the economic conference. The paragraph dealing with the economic conference is as follows:

On the invitation of my government, an economic conference of members of the British commonwealth of nations will meet in Ottawa on July 18th next.

May I, Mr. Speaker, as leader of the Liberal party in this house say that we are pleased indeed that the government of Great Britain and the governments of the dominions of the British empire have accepted the invitation of Canada to be present at the imperial conference to be held here this year. We are pleased that at last a date has been definitely fixed and that the conference is to meet in Canada. And may I add in all sincerity that we of the Liberal party will do what we can, in so far as our point of view will permit, to cooperate with hon. gentlemen opposite in making the conference the great success which all Canadians hope it will be. I should be happy if it were possible to believe that this House of Commons could be as one on the policies that would be put before the conference as those of Canada. But unless there is a great change between now and July the 18th in the point of view of hon. gentlemen opposite and of ourselves with respect to the significance of tariffs and the part they should play in governing trade, I fail to see just how we may get together. I would ask of my right hon. friend that there be given to this House of Commons during this session of parliament a full opportunity to discuss the questions that are to come up at the economic conference, in order that the members of this house may speak their mind, and speak it very freely, with respect to the policies that should be put forward at the conference. Indeed, I should very much like to see the government state its policies in the form of a resolution before this house, and have the endorsement of those policies before they submit them to the conference.

If they were to do that they would be in a very strong position when presenting the Canadian viewpoint. I hardly expect they will be willing so to do; however, that is for them to judge. But I do say that this House of Commons is entitled to know what particular line the ministry intends to take; that we should have ample opportunity to discuss the pros and cons, so that when Canada's voice is heard at the conference this country will know whether what is being presented is in accordance with some general consensus of view or whether it is the opinion of only one section of the country that is being expressed.

I should like to refer to the economic conference at a little greater length, Mr. Speaker. As it is almost six o'clock I would ask the permission of the house to go on after recess.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

After Recess

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: When the house rose at six o'clock I was beginning to outline the Liberal attitude towards the approaching imperial economic conference. I had said that as a party we were pleased indeed that the Prime Minister had found it possible to receive from the other dominions and Great Britain an acceptance of the invitation of the government of Canada to have the conference meet in this country. It would be strange indeed if the Liberal party were not wholeheartedly in favour of any conference which gives promise of the development of inter-imperial trade, because, as is well known, it was the Liberal party that instituted the British preference which became in time an imperial preference. I believe the records will bear out the statement that what was given in the way of preference originally and whatever has been given in the way of increased preference to Great Britain at any time since has been given by a Liberal administration. One may search the records of this parliament in vain to discover a time when a Conservative administration increased the preference. There are numerous instances, none, of course, so glaring as that afforded at the special session of 1930, where a Conservative administration has materially lessened the preference to Great Britain.

When Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Right Hon. Mr. Fielding decided in 1897 upon the preference as a matter of policy in regard to the tariff there were in the main two reasons that actuated them. One undoubtedly was senti-