

C 67106

T-1000--W

Ottawa, May 22nd. 1923.

Hon. Wm. S. Fielding,  
Minister of Finance,  
Ottawa.

Dear Mr. Fielding:

We come before you to-day on behalf of the Woollen and Knit Goods Mills of Canada, the workers who rely on the Mills for their means of livelihood, and the people in and adjacent to the small Mill towns scattered throughout the country. There are mill towns in over one hundred constituencies and the majority of these are small places where the mill is the foundation of the prosperity of the town.

It is not our intention to discuss with you trade figures and statistics, for in this we will acknowledge you our master, but we would most respectfully submit that to-day, no more than in 1900, can you, Sir, envisage the results of persistence in the present policy of reducing the duty on British Goods. If in the opinion of the Government the sound and growing mills which have been built up since the disaster twenty years ago are of no value to Canada, then we can advance no arguments which will move you.

We are men whose life work is bound up in trade and in 1900 we advised the Government that an increase in the British Preference at that time would end in disaster. Our arguments did not prevail. The duty was lowered and within a few years the policy followed by the Government closed the doors of eighty-eight mills and condemned the industry to a slow and certain death. In 1904, after the careful and painstaking work of years had been destroyed, with the consequent dislocation of the lives of numberless citizens of Canada, you sent a commission to England, and as a result of an impartial finding on the facts, you raised the duty. At that time the mills were in a thoroughly disorganized and demoralized condition: so that the present mills have been slowly and laboriously re-built on the ruins of the old.

Today we will not believe that the reductions in duty are the result of a political expediency, nor the results of the Government holding the opinion that our mills are of no value to Canada, so that the policy of the Government must be actuated by the belief that there is a benefit to the people of Canada without any damage to the mills or the Canadian workers employed in the mills.

RE  
MAY 22 Recd

W.L. Mackenzie King Papers  
Memoranda & Notes

**PUBLIC ARCHIVES**  
**ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES**  
**CANADA**