

*Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement*

economic imperialism. As I say, I do not want to come under the administration of the laws of the United States. So long as I am able I want to remain in, and promote trade within the British empire, and if so doing is economic imperialism I hope that the Conservative party will always continue in the path of economic imperialism.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the house has been discussing the motion before it for nearly a fortnight, almost to the exclusion of everything else. In that course of time the subject matter of the resolution has been very thoroughly debated. It would be but occupying unnecessarily the time of hon. members to go over the ground that already has been traversed so well by other speakers. About all I wish to say at the moment is that, having regard to the importance of this agreement, it can truthfully be said that there has never been introduced before in the Commons of Canada an agreement of such great importance which has been so generally approved and so ineffectively criticized as the present one. The force of this observation is all the greater in view of the fact that this is the first session of a new parliament comprising in its membership groups not hitherto represented in this house.

The approval has been all but unanimous, if we except what is left of the old Conservative party in the house at the present time. I believe, with this exception, it might be said to be unanimous. I would draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that the house is overwhelmingly Liberal, and that with respect to this agreement there has not been a dissenting voice so far as the Liberal party is concerned. That is the more remarkable when it is recalled that the Liberal following is drawn from constituencies of all kinds, rural and urban, and from all parts of Canada. There are members here of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation party who were in the house during previous parliaments; they have in their ranks some new members. They, too, old and new alike, so far as they have spoken, have spoken favourably and approvingly of the agreement. There is another party which has come in with a considerable membership, the Social Credit party. In so far as its members have spoken their words also have been not of criticism but of approval of the agreement. There remains yet one other party, the Social Reconstruction party. It, too, has been unanimous in its commendation of the agreement. All that is left in opposition to the agreement is the remnant of the Tory party

[Mr. Lawson.]

in the house at the present time. After listening to the speeches of hon. gentlemen opposite who belong to that party, one thing, I think, is clear, namely, that no agreement with the United States would ever have been concluded by that party, under any circumstances whatever. Their argument, from that of the leader himself (Mr. Bennett) and throughout its ranks, has been that an agreement with the United States meant trade north and south, meant the end of the building up of Canada, meant the breaking up of the British empire, meant annexation, meant getting away from the British flag, and all that sort of thing to which the country has listened from Tory speakers for half a century past. That has been the sole contribution of hon. gentlemen opposite to the discussion of this great measure. I do not purpose, therefore, to spend any time in commenting on the line of attack they have made.

One misconception, however, which I should like to point out is that stressed by the last speaker who addressed the house (Mr. Lawson) as he kept making comparisons between what was set forth as the basis of negotiation of an agreement and the present agreement, as if the basis of negotiation of the agreement had been the agreement that hon. gentlemen opposite would have secured or ever thought they were going to get. His own leader made it quite clear that there is a distinction to be drawn between the basis of negotiation of an agreement and an agreement itself. As has been so well pointed out by other speakers, it is not usual for parties negotiating an agreement to make the basis of an agreement less than or equal to what they expect ultimately to receive. In fact, they usually seek to have the basis of agreement cover demands far beyond anything they ever expect actually to receive. The comparisons of the hon. member for South York are all beside the question.

I do take exception, very strong exception, Mr. Speaker, to the right hon. the leader of the opposition saying that he could or might have secured an agreement, to all intents and purposes, very similar to or substantially the same as the one which has been obtained by the present government. I think my right hon. friend knows that that is not correct. He knows of course, as an old parliamentarian and as one who has had much to do with the conduct of international affairs, that we are both precluded from telling the house the actual state of negotiations under his administration and what followed when the new administration came into office. To that extent certainly I am very much handicapped in trying to review what my hon. friend has