

Surely these are words of courtesy and common sense. Consider also the expression of Sir Robert Borden on a similar occasion:

We Canadians hold ourselves free to work out the problem or preference according to Canadian needs and conditions. For the same reason Canada must avoid any attempt at interference with the domestic policy of Great Britain.

Words equally courteous and sensible. The same may be said of Mr. Mackenzie King who, as the result of his wise and circumspect action, enjoys the respect and admiration of all the great leaders in British public life, and we are glad to know that he enjoys the proud distinction of being at least the peer of any statesman in the British realm.

Consider also the preference proposals of the Dunning budget and the trend of thought which inspired them. In presenting his budget with such substantial additional preferences to British goods with 589 items on the free list out of 1,188 items in all, Mr. Dunning said:

These tariff favours to those who favour our products are not the result of any bargain with any other country but of an attitude in international relations which we believe to be mutually beneficial. In other words, we do not intend to meet the other countries of the British Commonwealth of Nations in any spirit of petty bargaining but rather in the broad spirit of willingness to become in ever-increasing measure good customers to those who meet us in like manner. This is the spirit in which we desire to meet all nations, but we believe that within the British Commonwealth of Nations lies the greatest opportunity for mutual development of trade because of a common heritage, kindred institutions and a common patriotism.

That budget with its accompanying remarks had the effect of almost electrifying the great body of the British people as well as all the great leaders in British public life. Most favourable comments appeared in the British press. The Manchester Guardian, Liberal, described the Canadian budget as a rich gesture, the generosity of which every Britisher must appreciate. The Conservative press said:

The Dunning budget constitutes the greatest advance in imperial relations that has been seen since the war.

J. L. Garvin, in the *Observer (Independent)*, wrote:

The Canadian budget is one of those rare strokes of policy, which, like the Laurier British preference, illuminate the realities of empire.

Ramsay MacDonald declared:

Canada's last budget is an example of how the dominions can and will help.

But, Mr. Speaker, the dominions can and will help only when the reins of power are in the hands of the right-minded party. Unhappily for the good of all that is not the case

in Canada to-day. Unfortunately, very unfortunately for Canada and the whole empire, those glowing expectations were not to be realized during the past year. In its place what benefit has Canada received to date? The reply cannot be given in more appropriate words than those of General Smuts to his followers when he said:

What might have been the most brilliant and successful of all imperial conferences, has ended in disillusionment and disappointment for every part of the commonwealth of nations. If the final settlement of dominion status had gone hand-in-hand with a great gesture of friendship and comradeship, and with the holding out and grasping of helpful hands all around in this common hour of trial, what a landmark would this conference not have been in the history of the empire.

I cannot help but feel that every time the Prime Minister thinks of how lamentably he missed the mark, it must make him heartsick.

The former premier of South Africa sees in the conference a severing of old bonds without anything accomplished to replace them. A dangerous void has been left, and in language more in sorrow than in anger he exclaims:

I am sure the spirit is there, but it is a thousand pities it found no expression at the Imperial conference.

The conference took action to settle the status question, declaring on paper for a dominion independence which already existed in full sufficiency. Then the various units, led on by the Prime Minister of Canada, tried to bargain on lines of selfish interest. Well may we recall those poetic lines:

But oh! mankind are unco' weak  
And little to be trusted,  
When self the wavering balance thrusts,  
It's rarely right adjusted.

This is what General Smuts deploras, and instead of which he would have a new spirit of cooperation and helpfulness in our mutual relations.

If there had been present at that conference a Laurier, a Sir Robert Borden, a General Smuts, or a Mackenzie King and a Lapointe, there would have been accomplishments so substantial of which every British citizen might well be proud. But as it was there is nothing beneficial, but rather a condition very much the reverse.

If the opposition in this house had adopted a critical attitude towards the Prime Minister in his proceedings leading up to the conference, it might have been said that if we had left matters alone the result might have been different. Now, however, it must be evident to everyone that he has had every opportunity to show what he could do, but instead of bettering conditions his policies