

our goods to Canada. We are prepared to pay the price for it. We are prepared to give you a chance to trade in the British market but we tell you that before you consider the matter we want you to subscribe to the principle of free trade. We want you to agree to reduce your tariff or to abolish it altogether. Unless you will do so immediately there is no use of our discussing the matter any further."

That was the attitude taken by my right hon. friend. I do not hear very much applause from the other side of the house.

What kind of reception would Mr. MacDonald have received in Canada if he had made statements such as those which were made by the Prime Minister of Canada in Great Britain? I ask my hon. friends what kind of reception would representatives from Australia, New Zealand or South Africa have received in this dominion if they had spoken in the manner adopted by my right hon. friend? I wonder what would have happened to the object of their respective missions? In case I have done the Prime Minister the slightest injustice may I read as if it had come from the lips of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald a statement as nearly identical as it can be made with the statement which was made by my right hon. friend to the British government. I have substituted of course the policy of free trade which has been adopted by the MacDonald government for the policy of high protection adopted by the government of my right hon. friend. Let us suppose for the moment that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is speaking. We will have to assume the fact because nothing could be more remote than the possibility of any other person on earth but my right hon. friend using such language. Let us use as if used by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald words as nearly as possible identical. He would then have said:

Before offering to this conference the plan which, once effective, will in my opinion make for greater prosperity in all parts of the empire, I shall briefly state the fiscal policy of the administration of Great Britain, of which I am the head.

The Labour party of Great Britain believes in, and employs, the principle of free trade as of most advantage to the home producer of agricultural and fabricated products in world competition.

This policy of the Labour party has come to be known as the policy of "Great Britain First." In approaching the economic problems of our Empire, I stand four square behind that policy. . . .

Where is the applause from my hon. friends opposite? This is the kind of utterance of the Prime Minister which they applauded a few minutes ago. Why do they not now applaud?

The primary concern of Great Britain to-day is profitably to sell her manufactures. We believe that we shall be reaching towards a solution of that problem if we can establish a better market in Canada. This market we want, and for it we are willing to pay by giving in the British market a preference for Canadian goods. . . .

And so, I propose that we of the British Empire, in our joint and several interests, do subscribe to the principle of empire free trade, and that we take, without delay, the steps necessary to put it into effective operation.

First we must approve or reject the principle. I put the question definitely to you, and definitely it should be answered. There is here no room for compromise, and there is no possibility of avoiding the issue. This is a time for plain speaking, and I speak plainly when I say the day is now at hand when the peoples of the empire must decide, once and for all, whether our welfare lies in closer economic union, thus secured, or whether it does not. Delay is hazardous; further discussion of the principle is surely unnecessary. The time for action has come.

No wonder the Prime Minister himself will not applaud even his own sentiments!

Projects other than the one I propose have been placed before you. They have been carefully canvassed by our delegation, and, while we would avoid anything which might savour of premature condemnation, we are constrained to state that none of them can be accepted by Great Britain as an alternative at all likely to achieve the purpose we have in mind.

Until this principle is accepted it would be profitless to discuss the application of it in any great detail.

Then would follow the so-called "offer" to "Canada and to all the other parts of empire"—"based upon a 10 per cent reduction in prevailing general tariffs or upon tariffs yet to be created," and the Prime Minister of Britain's conception of the manner in which the principle may be employed, and the method of its application. Emphasis would be laid on the fact that he proposed free trade, and that it followed that what was proposed could not be considered as a step towards empire protection, that in the opinion of Great Britain empire protection was neither desirable nor possible, for it would defeat the very purpose they were trying to achieve. Mr. MacDonald would then have proceeded:

But whatever modifications may be found necessary these will not adversely affect—nay, they cannot but make more beneficial and lasting—the broad principle of empire free trade. . . .

Consistent with the fullest inquiry into the application of the principle of empire free trade, our deliberations must be governed by the time factor. If this change in our economic relationship is to be made it must be made without undue delay.

Here the suggestion would be made, "if we approve the principle," to constitute such committees as may, with the greatest ex-