

There is only one more thing I desire to point out, and it is that when dealing with a certain phase of the situation, in my judgment—and I express it only as my judgment—the Prime Minister entirely overlooked the fact that we have bound ourselves, in a manner that was acceptable to all governments, to successive parliaments and to the Canadian people, to a free association with the other elements of the British Commonwealth of Nations. I cannot but think that this was not answered by the language of the Prime Minister when he said, "Canada is Canada; South Africa is South Africa; Australia is Australia, and we have no interest in United Kingdom policies."

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I never said we had no interest in United Kingdom policies. We have interest in the policies of all countries.

Mr. BENNETT: Then I shall put it in this way, that while the Prime Minister says we have an interest in the policies of all countries, he made it clear that we had no special interest in the policies of the United Kingdom—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Not at all.

Mr. BENNETT: —or of the other component parts of the commonwealth of nations, and he developed the idea—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I rise to a point of order?

Mr. BENNETT: Surely.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The right hon. leader of the opposition cannot misinterpret what I said and expect me to remain silent.

Mr. BENNETT: I would not expect it and would not want it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I have made no statement of a character that would permit such an inference to be drawn. I have given the house every reason to understand that we have very special cause and every desire to cooperate with all parts of the British Empire and to be interested particularly in matters that pertain to any part of the empire.

Mr. BENNETT: Well, I was dealing only with the speech I listened to, not with the observations just made.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Hansard will show it.

Mr. BENNETT: Hansard will abundantly clarify any difficulty there may be on that point, for the speech was prepared and type-written; therefore it cannot be subject to any difficulties of expression. What was said, as

[Mr. Bennett.]

I took it down, was: Canada is Canada; South Africa is South Africa; Australia is Australia; the United Kingdom is the United Kingdom, and that with respect to the policies of the United Kingdom it was not for us to make representations or in any sense to interfere in their expressions of policy.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I say to my right hon. friend that he entirely missed the point that was being made. I was at the time taking exception to the dominions being lumped together as one and to their policies being regarded as essentially one, to be described in that way. I did not even refer to the United Kingdom. I was pointing out that each dominion of the empire has matters of immediate concern to itself.

Mr. BENNETT: It is so unfortunate that it was not so stated in the speech. I think the Prime Minister should be very grateful to me for having, by not being able to follow him, afforded him an opportunity thus to clarify something that might be regarded as a little, shall we say, cloudy in expression.

If anything was clear during the progress of the observations made this afternoon by the Prime Minister, it was that it was for the people of the United Kingdom, of Australia, of South Africa and so on to determine their own policies, and that Canada was Canada, Australia was Australia, and so on and so on. I only desire to make clear that for good or ill this country saw fit in 1926 and 1930 to declare for free association between the component parts of the commonwealth of nations known as the British Empire. In order that there might be no misapprehension about that, I thought I would look up the Statute of Westminster itself during the recess. I find that the statute, which is chapter 4 of the statutes of 1931, contains this preamble:

Whereas the delegates of His Majesty's governments in the United Kingdom, the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, the Irish Free State and Newfoundland, at imperial conferences held at Westminster in the years of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty-six and one thousand nine hundred and thirty, did make certain declarations and resolutions, which are set forth in the reports of the said conferences. . . .

And whereas it is meet and proper to set out by way of preamble to this act, that inasmuch as the crown is the symbol of the free association of the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and as they are united by a common allegiance to the crown, it would be in accord with the established constitutional position of all the members of the commonwealth in relation to one another that any alteration in the law touching the succession to the throne or the royal style and