

reported to the effect that the British are standing by empire preferences. Our own representative, Mr. Wilgress, is reported to the effect that Canada is giving its whole-hearted backing to freer multilateral trade; and there was a press dispatch yesterday of another character. My question is this: Will the government now inform us what decision was arrived at by the preliminary conference in London; and, secondly, what instruction has our delegation received from the government with respect to the attitude it should take on trade matters at Geneva?

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I do not think that these reports must necessarily be regarded as conflicting. The statement that Canada is giving its whole-hearted backing to freer multilateral trade is a correct statement, but it is not the whole statement in itself. Canada does not intend to give up what it holds for anything less than something better that it would hold after the arrangement is made. My understanding of the attitude of Sir Stafford Cripps is that it is quite in accord with that general policy. The whole attitude would not be correctly summarized in stating that the United Kingdom was standing by the empire preferences. I think we all regard the empire preferences as something quite precious which we do not intend to give up unless we get something which together we consider to be better than what we already have.

As to whether it will be possible for me to make or table a report on the discussions of the preliminary conference in London, that is something I would have to consider, because, being only one of the members of the conference, we shall have to see to it that we do not publicize anything which it might not be agreeable to the other conferees to have publicized before the line of conduct decided upon at that conference has been implemented in the negotiations at Geneva. I shall endeavour to give to the house as complete information as possible in that regard.

Hon. J. A. MacKINNON (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Some days ago the hon. member for Danforth (Mr. Harris) asked me a question along this line. I was preparing an answer, but I believe the answer just given by my colleague pretty well covers the question. If so I should be glad if the hon. member would accept that statement as an answer to his inquiry.

Mr. J. H. HARRIS (Danforth): Will the Minister of Trade and Commerce stick to his guns in regard to the speech he made

[Mr. Bracken.]

in the Ottawa valley, and not pay too much attention to what has been said by the Secretary of State for External Affairs?

Mr. MacKINNON: I think the statement to which my hon. friend refers, made by me, is exactly in line with the statement made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

CATTLE

INQUIRY AS TO RAIL GRADING BY PACKERS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. LEWIS MENARY (Wellington North): Through you, Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Is there any truth in the report that all cattle sold at stock yards across Canada will be rail graded by the packers and that the farmer will have to accept these returns as he does for hogs? If this is done the sale of cattle will be controlled by the packers, since, when the grading is done, the animals will be beyond the control of the farmers, the legitimate owners.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Right Hon. J. G. GARDINER (Minister of Agriculture): No arrangements have been made by the federal Department of Agriculture to rail grade cattle. I have no information as to what is being done provincially.

INDIAN ACT

CONVICTION OF BRITISH WAR BRIDE UNDER LIQUOR REGULATIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. G. DIEFENBAKER (Lake Centre): I do not know to whom I should direct this question, whether to the Minister of Mines and Resources, the Secretary of State or the Minister of Justice. It has to do with the conviction a few days ago of a British war bride for an offence contrary to the Indian Act, in the matter of an infraction of the liquor regulations. The question I wish to ask is this. In view of this anomaly having arisen and this woman having been declared to have the nationality of her husband by reason of marriage, is consideration being given to the amendment of the Citizenship Act to remove this anomaly, or in any event to grant this woman a free pardon?

Hon. J. A. GLEN (Minister of Mines and Resources): I do not know whether the question is addressed to me, but I believe it should be placed on the order paper. At all events I shall take this as notice, and perhaps the proper minister will give an answer later.