

settle with greater efficiency a wide variety of bilateral problems.

This consultative committee will furthermore have to gather at the ministerial level or at the higher officials level, at least every two years, and will then be free to discuss all subjects of common concern.

Fourth, the protocol provides prior consultations for any significant change to the preferential tariff treatment that either party would consider.

Since the original 1932 trade agreement between Canada and New Zealand was introduced in Canada as an act of Parliament, the amending protocol must be introduced as an act amending the act. By approving the protocol for purposes of official acceptance by Canada, the cabinet has decided consequently that this amending bill, which is required, must also be introduced before Parliament.

And I hope that honourable members will be ready to accept Bill S-4 and to refer it to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence.

I understand the comments made by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) but, as this legislative proposal has been introduced by the Minister of External Affairs, I feel that, in accordance with the House's usual procedure, it should be referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence.

In any case, I will consult my colleagues who have more parliamentary experience than I to see if there is not some other way to deal with this bill in committee in order to satisfy the hon. member.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, why then do we have a committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs?

[English]

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I should like to begin by congratulating the Parliamentary Secretary for his presentation. I think I will not quite emulate his brevity, but I shall not deliver lengthy remarks on this bill. I think it is a good thing to have Parliamentary Secretaries involved in legislation. I note, however, that so far as the record shows, at no phase of the consideration of this measure in the other place was any minister present when it was being discussed.

I am not convinced the bill is as innocuous as it may appear at first blush. I think it may be possessed of a little more potential for importance than may appear. This is an interesting measure in that it is one bilateral treaty which has stood untouched for 38 years. It comes into the area of personal recollection. I can remember as a youngster of 11 that in the election campaign of 1930 everybody was talking about New Zealand butter. Then there came on the scene a great man who was going to blast his way into the markets of the world and make tariffs work for the farmers as free trade had never worked for them.

We had on the scene in the thirties a very vigorous personality and powerful leader. He is not, and was not, my favourite among Conservative leaders but he did

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many things when it came to economic matters. It was interesting how he looked at the Commonwealth as it was called in his time. While Bennett had no use for the idealistic concept of free trade, he quarrelled with his friend Lord Beaverbrook about that. He did believe in freer trade, and this agreement with New Zealand which has stood since 1932 was one of the emanations of this belief. I think it is appropriate, too, that on the eve of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference we are tonight discussing a measure which directly emanates from a protocol signed by our own Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Prime Minister of New Zealand a few months ago. We are discussing something which had its origin in a year of Canadian centrality in Commonwealth affairs.

We have had periods through the years when Canada and Canadian leaders have given distinct direction to the empire, as it was once called, and to the Commonwealth of Nations as it was later called and is now called. We can think of Sir Robert Borden who in many ways was the father of the modern Commonwealth. We can think of Meighen who gave emphasis to the Pacific, so far as the Commonwealth was concerned, at the 1922 conference. And we think of Bennett in the thirties, making the then outrageous suggestion that Commonwealth conferences should be held other than in Britain and pushing his way to the very centre of things in an age of painful economic nationalism in an effort to get some sort of supranationalism in the world of economic nationalism through Commonwealth agreements. While the hopes of Bennett were not realized and the world did languish far too long in the trough of economic despondence, some of these agreements have stood, and stood well, and we are talking about one of them tonight.

We are very far from New Zealand, geographically, but in many ways very close to this senior member of the Commonwealth. I used to note at the United Nations General Assembly quite a correlation between the votes of New Zealand and Canada on a great many questions; we were very close in many points of view. I think it is important to note always that this Commonwealth is made up of a gossamer connection of all the states and the special associations of groups within the Commonwealth. We, naturally, could not be as close to New Zealand in deference terms as is Australia. We can be, and I think should be, even closer to the Commonwealth Caribbean than we are now. So the Commonwealth is wound up in a series of bilateral and perhaps trilateral agreements all within the framework of a most unique and interesting institution.

• (9:00 p.m.)

Once again we hear that the Commonwealth is threatened and that it is going to break up. I was appalled to hear on the CBC tonight that the Prime Minister of Canada who is in India was even publicly contemplating that a situation might arise where Canada may perhaps find herself leaving the Commonwealth. You do not leave organizations like the Commonwealth. You do not leave the United Nations, nor do you leave NATO because