

The Address—Mr. Mackenzie King

economic union, or whether it does not. Delay is hazardous; further discussion of the principle is surely unnecessary. The time for action has come.

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 Canada as alternatives at all likely to achieve the purpose we have in mind.

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

Then follows the so-called "offer" to "the mother country and to all other parts of the empire"—"based upon a 10 per cent increase in prevailing general tariffs or upon tariffs yet to be created," and the Prime Minister's conception of the manner in which the principle may be employed, and the method of its application. Emphasis is laid upon the fact that "the basis of the proposal is the adequate protection to industries now existent, or yet to be established," and this is further emphasized by the statement:

It follows, therefore, that this proposed preference should not be considered as a step towards empire free trade. In our opinion empire free trade is neither desirable nor possible, for it would defeat the very purpose we are striving to achieve.

Of the "offer" I shall speak in a moment. Then follows:

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 protection. . . .

Consistent with the fullest inquiry into the application of the principle of an empire preference, 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 is made to the conference, "if it approve the principle, to constitute such committees as may, with the greatest expedition and thoroughness, consider the various questions incident to its operation." The Prime Minister adds:

I am satisfied that whatever modifications in the general plan Canada may have to suggest will be ready for submission within a period of six months. I assume that you are all capable of a like measure of expedition.

Then follows an invitation to the conference to meet at Ottawa early this year, and the following as a final word of warning:

I have said that the time is now at hand when the doctrine of closer empire economic association must be embraced, if we would not have it slip forever beyond our powers of recall. Once again it were vain to suppose that lesser existing empire agreements will long outlive it, and, that being so, the day will come when we must fight in the markets of

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the empire the countries of the world shorn of that advantage which it should be in our individual interest to secure and maintain.

To me that is unthinkable, and I appeal to the national representatives here assembled in conference to forget, each one, those prejudices which forbid the realization of that empire-building plan by which we all may advance to greater prosperity.

I await your decision with confidence.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, what possibly could be the result of approaching the British government in that manner? There is no reference whatever to any policy of that government; there is no reference to their views and no reference to the views of the other dominions. It refers only to the Dominion of Canada and to the Conservative party of this country. With that policy the entire conference must be content. The conference was told it could not proceed with its deliberations until it had approved of the principle set out by my right hon. friend.

What reception would Mr. Ramsay MacDonald have received from my right hon. friend if the conference had been held in Ottawa instead of in England as it was originally hoped it might be, and if Mr. Ramsay MacDonald when first called upon to address the conference had proceeded in the manner adopted by my right hon. friend? Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has as much right to his views as has my right hon. friend as to what will bring about empire unity and prosperity. Let us suppose Mr. MacDonald had said that the government in office in Great Britain, the Labour government, believed in the policy of free trade, and that he thought the British Empire had become great by virtue of the policy of free trade which has existed for a hundred years in the British Isles; that the policy of free trade had led to an extension of the empire. Supposing Mr. Ramsay MacDonald had gone on to say: "That is the policy of the Labour party in England; I stand four square behind that policy and I am not prepared to consider anything until this conference endorses the principle of free trade, the principle our government has adopted. This is the time for action; this is not the time for words. Time is slipping from us. There will be no use discussing the situation unless you will agree to the policy I have laid before you." What kind of reception would my right hon. friend have given Mr. Ramsay MacDonald? Supposing Mr. MacDonald had then gone on to present certain proposals to the government of which my right hon. friend is the head; supposing he had suggested proposals in accordance with his views to reduce or abolish tariffs. Supposing Mr. MacDonald had said: "We want to sell