

would not have had all this trouble. May I be permitted to say this while I am on my feet—and it ought to be plain to every person in this country—hon. gentlemen opposite who have in the past expressed a different view should remember that under our British system the making of a treaty is practically a secret arrangement between the parties affected, until it comes before Parliament. In this country people have been led to believe at times that there was something wrong when members of the Government met members of the Government of another nation and made a trade arrangement on their responsibility before telling all the people of the country its contents. We did not know the contents of this arrangement until it came before the House, and if hon. gentlemen opposite want to follow in the line that some of them have taken in the past in criticising that method of making treaties, they must go to the United States for their model, instead of to the mother of parliaments or to the British Constitution. I want to point that out, so that we will have no more difficulty in the future in that respect, no matter what party is in power. It is the most utter rubbish for members of Parliament or other public men to go through the country trying to raise prejudice because the Government have entered into a trade arrangement and the details are kept secret until the arrangement is placed before the representatives of the people. That is our system, and so long as it is in vogue, that is the method they must follow, no matter what government is in power.

This side of the House believes in this arrangement. We cannot do otherwise than believe in an arrangement of this kind, because the late Government was sympathetic towards it, and took active steps towards bringing such an agreement into operation. But it is a more important thing than making a trade arrangement with the West Indies simply, far more important. It is laying the foundation of what the Government think ought to be the policy of all the overseas dominions and of their relation to the British Empire. That is the further development of inter-Imperial, intercolonial arrangements and this arrangement, the letter of it as well as the spirit, will be taken as the foundation for future agreements which the Minister of Trade and Commerce wishes to make. He will go to Australia, he will go to New Zealand possibly, and discuss agreements. The basis of his discussion there will be what we did with the West Indies. The circumstances will be different, the conditions will be different, but the basis will be this treaty which we are now putting through and consequently it is of far more importance than if we were just making a

single arrangement because this will be the model upon which the others will be based. The minister, therefore, will not think that we are factious on this side of the House in arguing it at some length and trying to get it in as perfect form as possible. We admit gladly that the Minister of Trade and Commerce knows more about this agreement than any member of the Government. It is his progeny, so to speak, and we want the Bill so framed that there will be no conflict over any word or any difference between it and the treaty. When a resolution is brought into this House on which a Bill is based we are not allowed to depart from that resolution one iota. The Bill must be based on the terms of the resolution. Here it is equally obligatory that there shall be no deviation, or anything that can be interpreted by any person as a deviation, from the contract signed with the West Indies. This is a contract entered into and this Parliament has no right to make any deviation therefrom. We must either approve of what the Government has done or disapprove and no change can be made in the contract any more than it can be made in any other contract without both parties to the contract consenting. So, we must be very careful because I contend that absolutely, technically, literally, the document in existence must control if there should be a dispute and not any Act that we may pass. We find something in clause 3 of the Bill about the British preference. It is not in the treaty. It may not do any harm but should we put anything about the British preference in the Act when it is not in the treaty? Is it necessary? Will the West Indies put something in their Act that is not in the treaty binding themselves to do something that the treaty does not bind them to do? I do not say that there is anything wrong in it but it is altogether unnecessary. The Department of Customs have interjected several things into this Act, perhaps to make it more workable from their standpoint, but these interjections should not have been made by the Minister of Customs, because they are not in the agreement. We cannot make the interpretation of this agreement; the two parties must make the interpretation and not this Parliament. My hon. friend from Welland raised a point that was partially answered by the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce. The hon. member for Haldimand gave a good business view, but he had not, I fear, caught the point of my hon. friend from Welland. Take clause 2 of the agreement:

On all goods enumerated in schedule B, being the produce or manufacture of any of the above-mentioned colonies, imported into the Dominion of Canada, the duties of customs shall not at any time be more than goods when imported from any foreign country.