

his Imperial preferential trade scheme with my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Starting with the original proposition laid down by Joseph Chamberlain some ten years ago, when he proposed that there should be a system of free trade within the Empire, and tariffs as against the rest of the world, we have had a general and peculiar gradation, until to-day we have a policy which changes with every whim of the English people. One day it is proposed to tax the bread of the English people; another time it is proposed that the colonies shall be called into consultation and that they shall say what tariff is to be imposed within the Empire. On other occasions and under other circumstances, we have had declarations upon this question. For my part, I am rather inclined to believe that there is a very large section of people in Canada who have hitherto supported my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce, but who are not very anxious to see any arrangement made with the Mother Country whereby entrance into Canada shall be given to the manufactured products of the Mother Country. I am quite sure that a large number of these people would like to know just how far the Minister of Trade and Commerce has gone with Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Chamberlain and the other leading lights on this question, how far he has committed himself, and what assurance he has given as to what his party and Government are prepared to do with regard to this wide question of preferential trade.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid I shall have to remind the hon. gentleman that he is rather wandering from the discussion of the principle in this Bill.

Mr. MACDONALD: We are dealing here with a question upon which my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce, his Government, his party, and his press in this country have been congratulating them in a very great degree as being the first step in the solution of the wider question. If this measure is not and is not to be any part of the solution of the problem of Imperial preferential trade, then I am going beyond my rights, although I think your ruling is a little strict. But I believe that the Minister of Trade and Commerce, if he has not already done so in this House, will be prepared to say that he has the right to congratulate himself upon the fact that this arrangement with the West Indies is a step in the direction of the attainment of the wider aspiration. That being so, I think I have a perfect right to discuss this question. I have the right to ask my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce, before he asks this Bill to be given a second reading, to tell us whether he himself or his Government has made any arrangement

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou).

with the men who in other parts of the Empire are the particular exponents of the wider scheme.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is going too far. I have given him what I regard as a ruling upon the matter, and I do not think it is competent to question that ruling without the usual recourse to an appeal to the House.

Mr. MACDONALD: If your honour pleases, I have the greatest possible desire to keep myself within the rules of this House. If I had the slightest idea that in the discussion of this question I was going beyond what was my perfectly legitimate right in asking my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) to tell us whether or not this is part of the wider scheme, then, Mr. Speaker, I would at once bow to your ruling. But I may be permitted to say with all deference—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. It is not permissible to discuss the ruling of the Chair. The only alternative is an appeal to the House. In my judgment a discussion of the abstract question of trade with the Mother Country is outside the principle of this Bill. In my judgment the hon. member is not confining his remarks to the principle involved in this Bill.

Mr. MACDONALD: I am quite sure, Mr. Speaker, that you have not, with your manifold duties, read the details of the Bill. I direct your attention to section 7 of the Bill:

The advantages or concessions granted by this Act to the colonies parties to the said agreement shall extend to the United Kingdom and such of the other British colonies and possessions as may be admitted thereto by proclamation published in the Canada Gazette.

And so on. I do submit, Mr. Speaker, that I have the right under the terms of this measure to discuss on its second reading the principle involved in it, as to how far its terms—

Mr. SPEAKER: I admit the hon. member has a right to discuss the principle of the Bill, but when he wanders off and discusses what took place in England on abstract questions of Government antecedent to the framing of this measure, it seems to me rather a departure from the strict principle of the Bill.

Mr. MACDONALD: I must say, Mr. Speaker, that the lines upon which you have laid down the limits of the discussion of this Bill seem to me somewhat narrow. I propose, however, without indulging in any speculations upon abstract problems, to discuss practically the effect of the agreement in regard to the United Kingdom and to the other colonies. Section 7 of the Bill says that the advantages under this