

free zone? Or will they discharge all of it at the regular piers of the port, the merchandise intended for the free zone then to be transferred to the free zone?

Certain practical difficulties are encountered in the establishment of free zones at American ports. It is not feasible merely to set apart a section of a port that is already occupied by shipping, foreign trading, manufacturing, and other concerns variously engaged in foreign and domestic commerce. In any case, free zones will occasion much new construction. Suitable areas must be located and capital must be provided for the construction of warehouses, terminal facilities, railroad connections, factories, bunker fuel facilities, etc., and it may be necessary in some instances to dredge suitable channels and harbours. The keen rivalry between American ports, moreover, complicates the application of a free zone policy at some ports to the exclusion of others. The selection of a few is met by charges of discrimination, while the establishment of free zones at many ports would multiply construction and maintenance costs and weaken the probability of attaining certain of the benefits expected from a free port policy. In the latter case efforts and cargoes would be needlessly scattered.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): I thank the Prime Minister for his very full explanation.

Mr. THOMAS CANTLEY (Pictou): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with very great interest to the remarks of the right hon. leader of the government, and I can conceive of no method which would do so much to stimulate the foreign trade of this country as that to which he refers. The free port of Hamburg, of course, is well known. There you find an enclosed area in one section of the port which is called the free port. It is walled and closed by gates, which when opened permit vessels to go in and pass out, and goods may be stored in the large two storied sheds provided for the purpose, opened, repacked and exported to other countries. If we had a similar arrangement in this country, a free port say on the Pacific coast, one in Montreal, and one in Halifax, I am assured it would largely aid in the extension of our foreign commerce, and I would recommend to the Prime Minister that the matter should receive very careful consideration. I believe there are large possibilities in it which should not be neglected.

Hon. PETER VENIOT (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the suggestion has been made that a free port be established on the Pacific coast at Vancouver, one at Montreal, and one at Halifax. Halifax and Saint John are our two winter ports on the Atlantic coast, and I would add to the suggestion that has been made that both these ports should be made

free ports and that no discrimination be made as between the two Atlantic ports.

Mr. DUFF: If we had free trade we would not need free ports.

MONTREAL BRIDGE TOLLS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. VINCENT DUPUIS (Laprairie-Napierville): Mr. Speaker, during the session of 1930 the Hon. R. B. Bennett, then leader of the opposition, speaking on the question of the Caughnawaga bridge bill in the House of Commons said in Hansard, 1930, vol. III, page 2794:

A bridge is nothing more than a part of the king's highway projected over a stream or a gully or whatever it may be, and that highway in principle is free for use to all the king's subjects. The toll idea is very much exploded as far as the general use of highways is concerned, and has been for years.

About a month ago a large number of petitions was tendered to the hon. Minister of Marine (Mr. Duranleau) asking, not for the abolition of a toll on bridges, but for a reduction of tolls on the harbour bridge and the Victoria bridge, as this had been promised by the minister himself previous to his election. I wish to know from him if he has now a report to give to the house on this matter in view of the fact that he told the house he would soon have a report to make on the harbour bridge and the Victoria bridge.

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): I will answer because the question is directed to an observation that I made in this house, and was intended for that purpose or not at all. What I said on that occasion I repeat. I have no doubt about the desirability of highways being free, and bridges are but highways, but it well may be that those who have control of that matter have concluded that another policy may be better adapted to their conditions. When the government of Quebec made it a toll bridge they did it for reasons which undoubtedly seemed good to them, and it is not my province to question the soundness of their judgment in that regard.

With respect to the harbour bridge in Montreal, I think the hon. member as a party man would be rather sorry he mentioned it because he realizes that it costs this country several hundred thousand dollars a year, and the question of tolls was a matter of contract in connection with the construction of the bridge. The city of Montreal and the province of Quebec are both making contributions to that annually to enable the deficit for that