

at Geneva the agreement on tariffs and trade; eight undertook to bring it into effect immediately, that is the 1st of January; others will come along from time to time.

Hon. Mr. BISHOP: Is the United States in that eight?

Mr. MCKINNON: The United States is in that eight; so is the United Kingdom; so is Canada; so is France; so are Belgium, and Holland. Therefore all these concessions on the several thousand items with these countries, in so far as the United States are concerned, become immediately and fully effective on the 1st of January.

Hon. Mr. BISHOP: And of course any concessions we make reciprocally?

Mr. MCKINNON: To them? Yes, because the intention of the government is to bring the tariff changes into effect by order in council. Of course, the agreement has to be ratified by Parliament. But it can operate by order in council from the first day of January.

The CHAIRMAN: How about the countries other than the eight? When will they probably come in?

Mr. MCKINNON: The difficulty in some cases was purely a matter of their constitutional practice and procedure: that they do not have the power to do it by executive action and have to await the assembling of their parliaments. Others are probably watching the situation at Havana very closely, and if what emerges there is not entirely to their liking they might be slower in bringing it into effect.

The CHAIRMAN: Still, they have signed the agreement.

Mr. MCKINNON: Yes, they have signed the agreement. The January 1st situation is a matter of provisional application in advance of ratification by the constitutional authorities.

Hon. Mr. LAMBERT: These eight represent, I suppose, a very large percentage of our foreign trade?

Mr. MCKINNON: I should think, 70 or 80 per cent of our foreign trade.

Hon. Mr. LAMBERT: As it has been in the past?

Mr. MCKINNON: Yes; I would say so, probably close to 80 per cent.

Hon. Mr. LAMBERT: These concessions, then, should increase it?

Mr. MCKINNON: Oh yes, undoubtedly should, unless some unforeseen calamitous condition develops.

Hon. Mr. LAMBERT: Of course this trade agreement will be subject as far as Canada is concerned to the reservations that were discussed yesterday?

Mr. MCKINNON: That is right.

Hon. Mr. DAVIES: When is it expected that the Havana conference will be concluded?

Mr. MCKINNON: Well, having been eight months at Geneva, my own guess would be that it will probably be a minimum of three months. I think we read the other day that there have been some eight hundred amendments moved to the charter to date, and even if they disposed of these by a ye and nay vote, it would take quite a long time to get through with them. However, as Mr. Deutsch emphasized yesterday, the vital thing is this: the abridged edition of the charter called the Agreement can stand on its own feet. It contains all the vital elements for a trade agreement; and even though the charter should be vitiated, or even though there should emerge no charter at all, the original group have got something quite good enough to go ahead on in the General Agreement. It can stand on its own feet and it is not subject to the vicissitudes of the discussions at Havana among some sixty nations.