

committee, I will go so far as to say that it was not at the dictation of His Majesty's government that it was not so referred; it was because it was impossible to get the unanimous assent of the delegations to its being so referred. . . . In the result Mr. Bennett is able to say that they were not discussed, and, I think, seriously discussed, in the meetings of the heads of delegations. . . . Your lordships will find in the press reports day by day a good deal of evidence that it was discussed at the meetings of heads of delegations. And I myself was present day after day when these things were discussed. But it is quite true they were only discussed as a sort of second reading discussion because, as Mr. Bennett has said in his speech at the second plenary meeting, he wanted the conference to subscribe to the principle before any more minute examination took place. We never did manage to subscribe to the principle. . . . Because, remember what Mr. Bennett's principle was. It was not the principle of preference that many guileless people have supposed. It was not even the principle of extending that preference to every customs duty that was in existence, or might be brought into existence. It was that a new customs duty should be put upon foodstuffs imported into this country, and this country only, or that this country only should be required to put a substantial customs duty upon foodstuffs, and especially upon wheat in order to give a substantial preference to the dominions in respect of all those things. All that was included in Mr. Bennett's principle, and will be found as a part of his speech which has been reported verbatim.

After listening to a statement of that kind can one wonder that a proposal of the kind was characterized as "humbug." How could the British people consider it as anything else? They were asked to put a tax upon food and raw materials coming into their country and in return there was not to be any lowering in Canada of higher duties which had been placed upon their commodities at the last session, but still higher duties were to be placed upon similar goods coming into this country from other lands. That is the proposal which was made. Again I go back to the question: how did the Prime Minister of Canada think that under a proposal of that kind he was going to get Canadian wheat into the British market? That is a question which keeps reiterating itself in one's mind. One is forced to the conclusion that some object other than that must have been in his mind, and so I come back to the view that the object he had so far as Canada was concerned was to make this country, as he has stated over and over again, an economic unit, a so-called self-sufficing unit, a country which will produce everything within its own borders and which will not have to import anything from any other part of the world; it will all be done here. He believes that that is a wise policy to pursue, and extending that idea into the realm of

empire, he talks about an empire economic unit wherein, after each part has been made self-sufficing, the empire shall exclude itself from the rest of the world. With such an idea in mind one can understand such a proposal being put up although certain to be rejected, but as a means of selling Canadian wheat in the British market I say it is impossible of interpretation upon any such basis.

Mr. CAHAN: Would the right hon. gentleman permit a question?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Certainly.

Mr. CAHAN: Will the right hon. gentleman explain how a tariff preference can be given in the English market for Canadian wheat except there be tariffs against foreign wheats entering that market?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not know that I am called upon to explain the matter in just the way my right hon. friend has put the question, but I will say this to him: the trouble with my hon. friend and with those who think like him is this, they can only admit in their mind one kind of preference, and that of a tariff preference. They cannot understand that there may be such a thing as a voluntary preference.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Hon. members may laugh at that, but they cannot understand any such thing as a recognition of good will or a recognition of the fact of our being part of one great British community. I repeat, they cannot understand how there can be such a thing as a voluntary preference.

Mr. CAHAN: What does "voluntary" mean?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am not surprised that my hon. friend asks what it means. It means exactly what it says, something that is done voluntarily from any motive, not as a result of bargaining but as a result possibly of offers, of proposals, of the adoption of an attitude which it is believed is merited or which it is hoped and believed will bring something in return.

Mr. CAHAN: Is it voluntary preference which is given to Russian wheat in the British market?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The voluntary preference I have referred to is the kind of preference which was introduced by Mr. Fielding in this parliament in 1897, a preference that time and again was extended in the Laurier and Fielding tariffs, a preference which was maintained by Sir Robert Borden and