

encies like Halifax, far removed from the seat of government, where businesses tend to be smaller and more personal.

At this point I had intended to draw to the attention of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) the question of the application of excise taxes to several small types of sailboats, the manufacture of which has been actively carried on since the end of the war in many small boat yards of Halifax county and throughout Nova Scotia. I intended to ask the minister to give that particular question his best consideration. From his statement to the house this afternoon, however, it is apparent that the minister has been giving the most sympathetic and effective consideration to this question and many others. I wish to compliment him on the forthright policy he has adopted and his particularly careful and thorough presentation of it in his public announcement; and to assure the minister that the consideration he has given the matters I have mentioned is very much appreciated throughout the country.

We are also to consider the general agreement on tariffs and trade concluded and signed at Geneva on October 30 after many months of negotiation. The comprehensive nature of this agreement, from the point of view of both the number of countries involved and the wide range of commodities affected, renders it by far the most important instrument relating to trade ever entered into by this country. In fact it is the most ambitious multilateral trade agreement ever attempted by the nations of the world. This is the first step in a broad programme designed to promote the freedom of world trade with a view to increasing the level of prosperity in all nations, and to provide a firm economic foundation for the establishment of world peace.

In Nova Scotia and the maritimes generally we are pleased at the prospect of increased trade with our natural markets in the eastern United States, the West Indies, South America and western Europe in the essential categories of fish and forest products. The announcement of the Minister of Reconstruction (Mr. Howe) relating to the export of sawn lumber to the United States has been welcome, and I wish to congratulate him on the policy he has instituted.

It is to be hoped that, once the real effects of this far-reaching agreement can be observed, a considerable expansion of this country's foreign trade will be shown over the whole range of commodities included in the agreement. One principle of which we must ensure observance is that the largest possible proportion of this expanded trade is

moved through Canadian ports. I, of course, speak particularly for the great port of Halifax, but it is true that one of the important contributions of the maritime provinces generally to the national economy is the provision of facilities for the movement of this country's foreign trade. Very recent events have given real cause for concern that protection of the interests of our Atlantic ports is not being sufficiently kept in mind. I cannot urge too strongly on the government the importance of maintaining the principle that our Atlantic ports be utilized at all times and in all seasons to the fullest extent.

A generation ago, Mr. Speaker, this parliament was not faced with the necessity of dealing at any length with Canada's relationships with the other nations of the world, nor was its consideration of domestic problems conditioned to any marked degree by the complications of international events. The great change that has come about could not be more forcefully illustrated than by the speech from the throne which we are now considering. The necessity for a Canadian foreign policy has grown up swiftly, while the attention of many of us was distracted by other things. Throughout the years during which Canada's status as a nation among the nations of the world has been gradually maturing, the primary responsibility for Canadian foreign policy has fallen upon the shoulders of the present Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), who for so many years held the portfolio of Secretary of State for External Affairs. With his firm and wise guidance, Canadian policy has developed according to the fundamental principle that Canada should accept her new status of autonomy and nationhood and undertake the growing responsibilities of membership in the family of nations together with her continuing membership in the British commonwealth of nations. Canada is today taking her full part in international organizations. All Canadians should take pride in the manner in which we have assumed and discharged our responsibilities in this sphere. In accordance with the precedents established by the Prime Minister as Secretary of State of External Affairs, we have ever tried to be a good citizen in the world community. We are today cooperating to the fullest extent in every effort directed toward the maintenance of international harmony and world peace, and in important instances our representatives have been able to provide outstanding leadership to the other nations of the world.

It has been our good fortune to have had outstanding representation in the international sphere. The Prime Minister has just returned