

I claim that the trade agreements constitute the foundation of imperial preferential trade. The Prime Minister put it well when he referred to the vision of Macdonald and Laurier. But, sir, it took the courage and vision, the businesslike and statesmanlike ability of our Prime Minister, to put the preferential policy into force. Hon. members may call it bargaining if they wish, but certainly it is not one of conciliatory approach. That is the policy of the right hon. leader of the opposition. I well remember that in 1931, during the debate on the address in reply, the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Irvine) asked the right hon. leader of the opposition what his method of approach would have been had he attended the conference of 1930. The right hon. gentleman replied that he would have made a conciliatory approach. We know the Liberal party under its present leader has always had its eyes turned toward Washington, and never more so than in the years 1927, 1928 and 1929. In 1930, in desperation the Dunning budget was introduced, by which one eye was turned towards London, the other remaining on Washington. They did give some preferences to Great Britain, namely on cut flowers and cast iron pipe.

I should like to go back a little further and place on Hansard a quotation to indicate the policy of the party opposite, and to show that not only has their policy been conciliatory, but, when dealing with tariff matters, it has been one of fear. I will quote from the speech of the right hon. leader of the opposition when he was Prime Minister in 1929, speaking on the budget. This can be found on pages 1403-4 of Hansard of that year:

I say that with the knowledge which we have before us at the present time, were we to do what hon. gentlemen opposite by their amendment apparently wish us to do, namely raise the tariff, we would be creating in the minds of the American people the very sentiment which would cause them to raise their tariff higher perhaps than it was ever their intention to raise it. We do not intend to take any action of that provocative character.

May I say to my hon. friends opposite, in the other corner of the house, that were we today to take a step along the lines of increasing the British preference to a greater degree than exists at the present time that step also might be misconstrued, for we know that there are people on the other side of the line who are just as anxious to be trouble-makers as certain people on this side of the line.

That is a policy of do nothing. He is appealing to those south of the boundary, and also wants to make some slight appeal to the British. But it is within the memory of hon. gentlemen here that the Hawley-Smoot tariff came into effect shortly afterwards, which

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closed the gates—the term he used the other day—closed the gates completely to the importation of our primary products into their market.

I could quote figures, sir, at considerable length to show how our trade with the United States under the Hawley-Smoot tariff decreased in 1928, 1929, and particularly in 1930, 1931 and 1932, right to the present time, owing to the tariff that closed the markets to us. Now we have the policies of the two parties, and I am going to propound to hon. members of the opposition and to the country a question which I think a reasonable one: Which do you think is the safest man to guide the affairs of Canada, one who approaches great questions with cringing and fawning and fear, or one who, like our Prime Minister, has the courage of his convictions and comes with a businesslike and sound proposition to lay before a conference, such as the proposition which formed the basis of these agreements? Which do you think is the safer man? There is only one reply. I will ask another question: Which do you think would command the greatest respect from the delegates assembled around this table in July last? Again there is only one answer.

Every part of Canada is anxious that we get down to business and pass these agreements. We want to get into the market in which we have the preference with our wheat, our flour, our cattle, bacon, ham, butter, cheese and many other items.

I would refer briefly to wheat, which is so important to the majority of farmers in western Canada. Many of the speakers opposite would have it thought that we expect an immediate increase in price. That is not the case; no one ever suggested that. What we do expect is a market for our wheat, a sheltered market, in which to sell in the neighbourhood of 150,000,000 bushels more than we are now selling annually. We admit, and it is recognized the world over, that supply and demand will always regulate prices; they have in the past and always will. But what we do expect is a market for more of our product. The opposition have argued that these preferences are useless. I would like to propound to them a question: What would they say if Great Britain should give Russia a preference of six cents a bushel, and place an embargo against our product? What would they say if she should give Denmark a preference on butter and bacon? What would they say if she gave Norway and Russia a ten per cent preference on lumber? We know what they would say; we know the howl that would go up. What does this