

amount of 33½ per cent. I have no doubt the hon. minister will say that he made a good bargain because he is getting access to the West Indian market for Canadian products, while not increasing the preference given by Canada. He may even go further, and say that the late Government was remiss in its duty, in that, having given a preference of 33½ per cent to the West Indies, it did not, at that time, secure access on favourable terms of Canadian goods to the West Indies. Let the matter of what the late Government did or did not do rest for the moment. What I say to the minister on this occasion and in this connection is, following what the hon. member for St. John has said, that what the people of this country want in the negotiation of any treaty is such action as will tend to reduce the cost of living. That is one great object that we have in giving sanction to any trade treaty, and when the minister was negotiating with the people of the West Indies to secure access of Canadian products to those islands, his business was to secure for the products of this country more favourable terms in the West Indies by giving still more favourable terms to West Indian products coming into Canada. This is to say, it was his business to abolish the duty on these articles which Canada does not produce, thereby reducing the taxation on the consumers of Canada, and, at the same time, securing expansion of Canadian trade in the West Indies. When this proposition was placed before the House, and I saw that the mutual preference was a matter of 20 per cent when we were already giving them a preference of 33 1-3 per cent; when I saw that a principle of the agreement was that the tariff on certain articles of food used by the people was to be increased, I could hardly believe that these were the terms of a commercial treaty negotiated by the Government of which the hon. minister is a member. The principle that it is wrong or dangerous to reduce the burden of taxation upon the people of Canada when the opportunity arises is one to which I wish to register on this occasion my absolute dissent. I would point out to the minister and those who support him that the radical difference in principle between his reciprocity arrangement and that negotiated by the Minister of Finance of the Government is that under the Liberal proposal, absolutely in accord with Liberal principles, there was an actual reduction in the burden of taxation upon the people of Canada, accompanied by an opportunity for the expansion of Canadian trade; whereas the principles underlying the present proposed reciprocity arrangement with the West Indies is that the consumers of Canada shall by carrying an increased burden, pay for such expansion of trade as Canada will be

able to secure under this arrangement. I hope I have established that there is in principle the widest difference between the reciprocity arrangement of the late Government with the United States and that now proposed by the Minister of Trade and Commerce in regard to the West Indies. Truly, I understand that in regard to the West Indies the matter is not one of serious importance, but I do want to say that when the minister goes to some other dependency of Great Britain, the trade of which is possibly of much greater importance than that of the West Indies, and undertakes to carry out a similar principle, the result is liable to be materially injurious to the people of Canada. In any case, let it be distinctly understood that there is a difference as wide as the Poles between the trade policy of the late Government and that of the present Administration; that the trade policy of the late Government was one of reduced taxation accompanied by expansion of trade, whilst the policy of the present Government is one of securing expansion of trade at the price of increased taxation upon the Canadian consumer.

Mr. E. M. MACDONALD (Pictou): Before this Bill goes through its second reading, there are one or two matters in regard to which the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce ought to enlighten the House. The hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce might be said to be the extra plenipotentiary of the Ministry. The other members of the Ministry deal with the various affairs that pertain to their particular departments, but when it comes to Imperial questions, to our relations with the Mother Country or with the other colonies, I think everybody in the Ministry and in the House will agree that these subjects are under the particular control and special guardianship of the hon. the Minister of Trade and Commerce. That being so, and considering the fact that my hon. friend spent quite a long period during last year in England, and discussed publicly and privately this question of Imperial preferential trade, the status of Canada within the Empire, or her relations with the other colonies, and the aspirations of himself and of his friends as to the future of preferential trade, I think that before my hon. friend asks this House to adopt this child of his he ought to tell us something about the relations of himself and of his Government to the people who are particularly interested in that wide question.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce had relations and discussions, no doubt of a close character, with Mr. Bonar Law, the leader of the Unionist party in the Imperial House of Commons. I am quite sure that Mr. Bonar Law never made that speech at Ashton-under-Lyne without having had some previous discussion of