

other speaking about interference in the domestic affairs of this country. That situation would not be tolerated for a moment. Then why should the Ramsay MacDonald government, struggling as it is with great problems, have this problem in addition and be embarrassed in this way by the Canadian administration?

I should like to quote one or two other authorities on this point, authorities very much respected in this parliament. I could quote a great many, but I will give only two, representing both sides of political feeling here. Sir Wilfrid Laurier spoke on this matter many times, and in this parliament on March 27, 1907, prior to the Imperial conference of that year, he made as the Prime Minister of the day a statement which I desire to quote: It will be found in Hansard for the session of 1906-07, at page 5538, and is as follows:

We would not accept the idea that the British public should force upon us their own fiscal views, and no more would they tolerate the idea that we should force upon them our own fiscal views; and, therefore, the only way in which the British Empire can be maintained upon its present foundation is by allowing to every nation composing it the measure of liberty that it has, and also the free choice of the fiscal policy which it is to maintain.

The other authority I wish to quote is Sir Robert Borden, also a former Prime Minister of Canada and leader of the Conservative party. The reference is to a luncheon given in his honour at the Savoy Hotel in London on July 31, 1918, reported in the London Times of the day following. It is as follows:

Sir Robert Borden stated that it should be clearly understood that the question of preference had not been considered this year by either the Imperial war cabinet or the Imperial war conference. The recent announcement on the subject was made on behalf of the British government as a statement of the domestic policy of the United Kingdom. As Canada claimed and exercised the right absolutely to control her own fiscal policy, Sir Robert said, so the representatives of the Dominions necessarily refrained from attempting any interference in the fiscal policy of the United Kingdom.

That position is diametrically opposed to the position taken by the present Prime Minister. Sir Robert continued:

Moreover, the people of Canada would not desire the people of the United Kingdom to shape or modify their fiscal policy solely to give a preference to the products of Canada, especially if such change should involve any supposed injustice, or should be regarded as unfair or oppressive by a considerable portion of the people of the United Kingdom.

Then after his return to Canada Sir Robert spoke in Toronto, and again he made a reference to the advisability of not attempting to

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

influence British political action. He is reported in the Toronto Globe of September 3, 1918, as saying:

We hold ourselves free to work out the problem of preference according to Canadian needs and conditions. For the same reason Canada must avoid any attempt at interference with the domestic policy of Great Britain.

I might quote also the position taken by Right Hon. George P. Graham, who was one of Canada's representatives at the Imperial conference of 1923, and the position taken by myself at that conference in discussions having to do with preference, which came up at the time. Those positions were precisely the same; they were to the effect that if the British government, for reasons of its own and suiting its own needs, wished to give Canada a preference, certainly we would be glad to have that preference though we would not bargain for it. We would not force it. We made it clear that if there were ever a tariff imposed in Britain, Canada would expect a preference under such tariff, but that it was for Britain herself to determine her own fiscal policy. That is the position which had been taken right along by all prime ministers. It has remained for my right hon. friend to change that precedent, which I believe to be more important than any other single precedent that can be cited, as securing the autonomous rights of each part of the empire.

To conclude this part, may I say that there are different forms of coercion, and that coercion has taken its toll in different ways in the past. For a long time military coercion was the thing that had to be watched as between different parts of the empire. Military coercion cost the British government that portion of North America which to-day is represented by the United States of America. Military coercion on the part of any one part of the empire against another is a thing which I hope we can regard as forever past. But that is not the only form of coercion possible within the empire. You may have coercion by legislative enactment, and that is a form of coercion which, so far as the dominions are concerned, might easily have made itself felt had statesmen been prepared to act in that way. Indeed, this very conference was seeking to remove what remained in the nature of coercion by legislative enactment by erasing from the statutes of Britain certain enactments which took away the full rights and liberties from this parliament with respect to its legislation. That is a form of coercion that is disappearing.

But there is to-day the danger of another form of coercion, and it is perhaps the most