

won half a battle. The Right Hon. Neville Chamberlain will have vindicated his father's defeats at the conferences in 1897 and 1902.

As to our Canada, she will have to content herself with whatever crumbs there are in the midst of this inter-imperial confusion, and the standard "Canada first" will be relegated to the museum of national disasters.

And as a bit of consolation, all the nations will await the future international economic conference where the question of abolishing tariffs will not even be mentioned, and we will wonder when and how the crisis will end.

Mr. Speaker, the man at the helm of government always keeps his eye on the future, but at present, what dark chasms filled with surprise and mysteries lie before us!

Mr. J. K. BLAIR (North Wellington): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in this debate it is my intention to refer to certain ideas which have been advanced during the discussion in this house. I shall first enumerate them:

1. The paying of tribute to our empire by other nations.
2. The effect of this on the British Empire.
3. The increase in high tariffs.
4. The fixation of the time for the application of high tariffs at five years in order that this government will be enabled to enforce its policies even though the country declares otherwise.
5. The placing in the treaty list of certain articles which do not affect Great Britain and therefore should have been taken up under the regular schedules.
6. The lack of parity of our dollar with the English pound, making the British market useless at the present time.

I should like to review the history of the British Empire in its relations to other nations, and also the colonial and imperial conferences which led up to the last conference. I shall endeavour to show the effect of this conference upon us as an empire and will discuss this matter from the different angles taken by former speakers. Our future as an empire can be interpreted only through a knowledge of the past. Whether the British Empire will continue to prosper or fall into ruin can be foretold only after a comprehensive study of past empires which rose and fell.

History is philosophy teaching from experience, and the cause of the overthrow of such ancient empires as Greece and Rome also applies, in principle, to the downfall of the recent German empire. All the empires of the past have been founded on the idea of assimilation, on the effort to force different human materials through one mould in order to form one na-

tion. These past empires sought to impress their supremacy upon other nations and compelled them to pay tribute. This was the action taken by the German empire, and it is being suggested by this government that we follow a similar practice. Such action created a spirit of hate in the neighbouring nations and inculcated a feeling of vengeance. This spirit of hatred was greatly augmented by the restrictions placed upon trade and commerce. Ancient empires, and recently the German empire, imposed burdens upon neighbouring nations by the adoption of a zollverein system. Naturally, these neighbouring nations were dissatisfied and were constantly on the outlook for an opportunity of retaliation. Shall we as an empire follow this example and antagonize other nations as Germany has done?

Empires and nations are like individuals and the policy they follow determines their fate. Mr. Stanley Baldwin indicated at the conference the fundamental principle which he wished to follow—the lowering of tariffs and the retaining of harmony with other nations. The Prince of Wales has suggested that the great difficulty of the present day is the obstruction to trade and commerce. The Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett), helped to fashion the spirit of this last conference and assisted in changing the previous British aspect towards other nations. Empires which follow a policy of demanding the last pound of flesh will not and cannot endure. Is Great Britain going to follow this policy, which will lead to destruction, or is she going to adopt better principles which will bring about the expansion and prosperity of the empire? The British Empire is not an empire in a historical sense; it is a commonwealth of nations governed for the great part by the most democratic forms of government known to history. It is a system of states; it is not only a static system but a dynamic system which is revolving at all times toward a new destiny, unfettered by race, time or space. In these days when the light of natural science is penetrating into every department of human thought and knowledge the effect of physical environment upon the character and history of the peoples of the world is becoming more generally recognized. Great Britain believes that a people must have a local government suited to their needs, customs and traditions; she believes in the adjusting of tariffs to suit the times and conditions of trade.

Means should be available to each government whereby political, social and commercial aspirations could be moulded into it by its constitution. Britain wishes every country under her to work out its own destinies