

Canada, the people of the Empire have a right to know the intention of the Government.

Mr. EMMERSON: I raised the point as to our bona fides in attempting to legislate as proposed by my hon. friend in this Bill. It is a matter of supreme importance. As I understand it this is the initial movement in an attempt to have mutual preferential arrangements between the overseas dominions and in so far as the attempt has been successful in this instance I certainly would desire to congratulate my hon. friend, but in our empire-building of tariffs it would be desirable that we should start right and that there should be at least bona fides in any arrangements that may be entered into. The Minister of Trade and Commerce has adverted to the fact that the West Indian people pinched themselves in order to enter into this agreement, in order that they might promote intercolonial trade between their colonies and Canada—a very worthy aim and no doubt worthy of some sacrifice. But if in addition to that we seek to pinch them further by our legislation it certainly would be unfair and if we are to have tariff arrangements, mutual preferences among the overseas dominions of the Empire and with the Mother Country, what we agree with them, what we undertake to do for them we should fulfil to the full letter and spirit of the law. I remember a few years ago when under the Washin'gton treaty we thought a boon had been secured for Canadian exports to the United States, particularly with reference to fish. Under the terms of that treaty we had hoped and we expected to have certain fish admitted free or at least on favourable terms in the United States market, but the Americans, by certain tariff regulations and enactments, imposed on the cans and packages which contained the fish heavy burdens which absolutely nullified the benefits that we thought we had secured under treaty. We in Canada to-day are practically doing the same thing with respect to the imports from the British West Indies. The ordinary exporter in any of these West Indian Islands, reading this agreement, would interpret it as meaning that no matter from what country they were shipped or under what circumstances the goods which were the product or manufacture of these islands could come into Canada with certain preferential privileges. That is in accordance with the terms of the agreement. He is told that the agreement gave him that privilege, but the tariff laws and enactments of the Canadian Parliament restrict and limit it and the boon for which he made a sacrifice and for which he pinched himself is not the boon he thought it would be, it is something else, it has a string to it, it is limited. It is

left uncertain whether the four-fifths is to be four-fifths of the maximum tariff of the country or of the minimum tariff; that would very materially affect the duty necessary to be paid on that importation and so affect the advantage of this market to the exporter of that product from these islands. I submit that the people of the West Indies would be justified in howling if you will, as we howled some twenty-five or thirty years ago with regard to the attitude of the Americans in connection with our fish exports into their country. It was a matter of serious grievance and as a result we were led in this country to believe that the Americans as a nation did not recognize or observe their treaty obligations—and the greatest imputation that we make against the people of the United States is that they do not fairly and honestly observe their bond agreements. I believe that the result of the elections of 1911 was largely due to resentment against the people of the United States for the treatment which they had accorded to Canada in the past.

Mr. SHARPE (Lisgar): Hear, hear.

Mr. EMMERSON: My hon. friend says hear, hear. I am glad he does. Let us not then place ourselves as a Canadian nation in the same attitude and let us not go down to the same level in the observance of our agreements. I think my hon. friend would act wisely if he amended the Bill so as to read that this Parliament approves of the agreement which he has solemnly entered into and let that become law and then the rights of the West Indian people can be determined under that agreement, determined as they expect them to be, with certainty. They would then have whatever privileges the laws of Canada gave them, and I venture to say the Exchequer Court of Canada would determine that any importation of the products or manufacture of any of these colonies would have the privilege of being imported into Canada no matter whence they came or how or why or by what method they appeared on Canadian soil. But if this legislation is passed, then the rights which were created under this agreement or treaty are shrivelled, and are restricted to mean that the goods must come direct and be subject to certain limitations to be found in our tariff regulations. It goes beyond this particular case, because, if Canada is to establish for herself a reputation of that kind, it will only lessen the possibilities of entering into relations with other countries. I can well understand Australia and New Zealand making answer to my hon. friend to the effect, 'Oh, it does not make any difference what agreement we enter into with