

us and the Minister of Finance has been congratulated from one end of Canada to the other on the step he has taken in the development of the British preference and in the furtherance of unity among the different parts of the empire. When General Smuts visited Canada in the early part of this year he referred to the fact that the past ten years have been spent in elaborating the status of the individual parts of the empire, in developing the freedom of the dominions through their respective constitutions, and in bringing about their recognition as equals in the empire and in the world. His appeal was for unity in imperial relations and he expressed the hope that the next decade might be devoted to giving reality to that unity. He referred to the fact that Canada had taken the lead in the development of dominion status and appealed to Canada once more to take the lead in the new program. Canada has now taken the lead. She began to do so in 1897, and she has taken a further step at this time with the intention of further moulding the empire.

Hon. members on the opposite side of the house have frequently said during the progress of this debate that there are many items in the budget brought down which will not benefit Canada, and that there will be given in reality no additional preference to British products. That is quite true and the Minister of Finance, when delivering his budget address, referred to them in these words:

There have existed in our tariff, for years, many items carrying rates of duty in the British preferential column, but relating to commodities in which none of the various British countries has been an effective trader.

Hon. members of the opposition seem to take great delight in referring to the item of hay. In listening to the addresses of those hon. gentlemen I have been reminded of the fact that a drowning man grasps at a straw; apparently that is what hon. members are doing in this particular case when they refer to the items of hay and straw in the tariff schedule. I wonder if it is more absurd to have hay and straw come in free of duty from England than it is to have those commodities set out in our tariff as bearing a duty of 75 cents a ton.

Mr. DUNNING: That is the point.

Mr. BOTHWELL: It is quite true that we never expect to import hay and straw from Great Britain or any other part of the British Empire, and there is no reason for having a tariff of 75 cents a ton.

In connection with the budget and the tariff schedules in particular, I think the min-

[Mr. Bothwell.]

ister is to be congratulated on the fact that the changes made by him have been made after an exhaustive study by the Tariff Advisory Board. The Financial Post in its issue of May 8 takes the opportunity to congratulate the minister, in the following words:

Possibly the most significant feature of the tariff changes is the indication it gives that Mr. Dunning will rely more largely than his predecessor upon the advice of the Tariff Advisory Board.

Mr. BENNETT: Hear, hear.

Mr. BOTHWELL:

Mr. Robb appointed the tariff board but paid little attention to it, leaving the impression that it existed chiefly as a buffer between himself and claimants for tariff changes.

I might mention that the tariff board was only in existence a short time, and many of the items which came before it for investigation were never disposed of during the lifetime of our late lamented minister.

But the Tariff Advisory Board is no pigeon-hole for Mr. Dunning. From the changes announced one can see that many cases brought before the board have received careful consideration. The importance of this to Canadian business cannot be exaggerated.

No one who followed the sittings of the Tariff Advisory Board will deny the fact that there has been exhaustive investigation by that board. Any person who was interested in the work of the board and who had an interest in any application before the board was entitled to appear there and to be heard, and the board gave consideration to representations made before it. No person will deny that the Tariff Advisory Board has been a great addition to the departmental features of our government. Many hon. members opposite have for the past few years been concerned very much with the operations of the Tariff Advisory Board and particularly with the work of the Consumers League. Questions have been asked in this house and they have been answered; yet it does not appear from the questions which are asked that hon. members opposite have taken the opportunity to find out what the Consumers' League stands for. When the Tariff Advisory Board was first formed it was the belief of many people throughout Canada that there was the possibility of highly organized associations, such as the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, appearing before that board and presenting only their side of the case. The facts in connection with various applications which might be made by such associations would be peculiarly within the knowledge only of the firms represented. The idea behind the formation of the Consumers' League was to have