

But there is a basis for mutual help, and that is just what I want to appeal to. The men out in the current of business and trade, down at the very roots of this matter in our country, converse it with it day by day, born and brought up in it, ought to have a great deal of experience and very bright and practical ideas, and there ought to be some way by which these bright and practical ideas can be communicated to the Department of Trade and Commerce, and the best of them sifted out and if possible put into practical execution.

I just want to refer to two or three things in a scrappy kind of a way. The Department of Trade and Commerce, looked at from the plane of the business men of the country is supposed to be doing something, and is supposed to be able to do a great deal more than it is doing. Sometimes however I think that it is supposed to be doing a great deal more than there is any possibility of its accomplishing, and I want to outline in a moment what the Department of Trade and Commerce and the Government of which it forms a part is able to do and what it is not able to do in this matter of fostering and extending the commercial interests of the country.

The Government and the Department of Trade and Commerce are able to put tariffs on the Statute Books and make them operative in this country. You may be a free trader or a protectionist, this afternoon we are neither free traders nor protectionists for the purposes of this conference; but whatever you are you must all agree that the fact of a tariff going into operation in this country affects both the production and interchange of commodities.

Very well, that is the first proposition, and it is perfectly clear: a government can by tariffs stimulate and depress, change and alter, the currents of production and the currents of interchange of the country's products. We can go a little further than that and can proceed in the matter of tariffs, and all agreements based on those tariffs up to what we call the preferential interchange of commodities between ourselves and other countries.

When we arrive at that arrangement with any country we put our trade with reference to that country on a different basis from