

I use that merely as an illustration to show that people will receive an erroneous impression through the statement made by my hon. friend when he told the people that but for the determination of the people of Canada to remain irrevocably a part of the Empire, it would not be possible to make treaties of this kind.

Let me ask the Minister of Trade and Commerce if he has given any thought to the statement his leader made in the city of New York a few months ago, after the last general election. He told the people there, as explaining why Canadians had rejected the arrangement of reciprocity, that the Government was opposed to making any fiscal arrangement with any country, whether colonies of the Empire or not; that it would lead to entanglement and dissatisfaction, and for that reason he and his Government were opposed to any such arrangement. Is the hon. gentleman aware that his leader told the people of New York that arrangements between the colonies in South Africa had led to dissatisfaction and that on that broad ground this Government was opposed not only to the arrangement of reciprocity with the United States but even to fiscal arrangements with parts of the Empire. How does he square the present arrangement with the West Indies with the sentiments publicly and deliberately expressed by his leader on that occasion?

I hope I have not wandered too far from the point. I do not often do so, and I hope, Mr. Speaker, that if I have erred you will pardon me. I have no particular objection to this treaty, except on the grounds that I have stated and that we are not in a position to discuss it as it ought to be discussed. As I have said before the hon. gentleman asks the House to adopt this Bill he ought to tell us what arrangement he has made for improved steamship service. If he has not made such an arrangement he ought to be able to tell us that he is going to do so. The Government proposes to send away \$35,000,000 to be used in paying labouring people outside of Canada. My hon. friend, surely, ought not to allow \$20,000, or even \$50,000 a year of subsidy to stand in the way of getting a steamship service between Canada and the West Indies which will prove beneficial to the freight and passenger traffic of this country.

I find that schedule B of the treaty provides that certain articles of the British West Indies shall be admitted at four-fifths of the duty of similar articles coming from the Mother Country. In this list are a number of articles which are not produced in Canada, articles of food, such as sweet potatoes and yams. It seems to me that these ought to be made absolutely free. I think when my hon friend had an oppor-

tunity of making an arrangement which will lessen the taxes on the food of the people of this country, he ought to have provided that these articles coming from the islands with which we have made an arrangement should be free. This may not have been a wide opportunity, but it was an opportunity, and I should have been glad if my hon. friend had availed himself of it, instead of picking out one or two articles and raising the duty on these so far as the rest of the world is concerned. Instead of placing on the dutiable list any article now free he ought to have selected articles now dutiable and, so far as these colonies are concerned, made them absolutely free in order, as I have said, even in small measure, to lighten the burdens of our own people.

Hon. FRANK OLIVER (Edmonton): I do not wish to delay the House at any great length, but I desire, on the second reading of this Bill, to emphasize the importance of a matter alluded to by the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Pugsley) as concerning the principle laid down by and contained in this Bill. It is suggested by the Minister of Trade and Commerce that this is one of a series of such arrangements he hopes he will in the future be able to make throughout the Empire. This being the case, if the principle is not satisfactory I think now is the time to say so, in order that the minister will be under no misapprehension when he comes to negotiate treaties with other parts of the Empire. It was certainly with a great deal of surprise, I am sure, that the people of Canada learned that one of the conditions upon which Canada secures an extension of her trade with the West Indies is that articles of food now imported into Canada free are to be made dutiable; in other words, that, as the price of the further extension of Canada's trade with the West Indies, the cost of living to the consumers of this Dominion is to be increased. I admit that in amount the matter is trivial, but I maintain that the principle involved is absolutely objectionable, and that such a principle embodied in future arrangements will certainly be objectionable, and proportionately so as relating to the amount involved.

If I understood the hon. minister aright when introducing this Bill, a considerable number, if not all, of these products of the West Indies which are to be permitted to come into Canada at a preferential rate, are entering Canada at the present moment under a preferential rate of 33½ per cent, as against the rate of 20 per cent proposed by the Bill. In other words, the West Indies are being guaranteed for a term of years a preference of 20 per cent, while at the present moment they are enjoying a preference on the same articles to the

Mr. PUGSLEY.