

into Canada. I hope we will continue to import all the British anthracite coal that they can supply for our needs. By no manner of means did the 150,000 tons or 200,000 tons of Russian coal interfere with the imports of British anthracite. All it did was to displace a certain tonnage of the American product. My right hon. friend cannot claim that one ton of Russian coal displaced a similar amount of the imports from Britain.

Then he adroitly attempted to get under the mantle of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. In 1902 Sir Wilfrid Laurier introduced the British preference.

An hon. MEMBER: No, 1897.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): In 1897. When the British preference was first introduced it was not upon the basis of bargaining, it was a free will offer in the hope that it would benefit Canada. Anyone who contended that he had not the interest of Canada at heart when he was making the agreements with Great Britain and the other overseas dominions would be stating something that is not true. We are all for Canada first.

An hon. MEMBER: No, no.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): The adoption of that slogan by my hon. friends during the last election was an endeavour on their part to appropriate to themselves a slogan which never belonged to them in the slightest degree. They succeeded in making the people of Canada believe that. For the first time during the forty years I have been engaged in public life and taking part in election campaigns, they were willing to admit that they had a slight love for Canada in preference even to the mother country. They were always the party of loyalty, they were always the party that stood up in defence of the empire. But on this occasion, "Canada first" was the slogan; all others came second. What would have been said of my leader and his followers, what would have been the tirade hurled against them by hon. gentlemen opposite had they taken that position? But the fact remains that any trade arrangement we make, I care not with whom, must always have as its first proviso the ample protection of our interests. Never was anything else thought of by the government of Sir Robert Borden, by the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, by all the governments which have preceded the one that is in office to-day, than that Canada's interests should be fully protected.

My right hon. friend cannot claim that he is going to don the mantle of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and in a moment or two I shall explain why. He stated that all the overseas

[Mr. C. A. Stewart.]

ministers were behind him in his demand that this should be an agreement, a bargaining by all the overseas dominions through their representatives at the Imperial conference. I have looked through the records, not very carefully, but in no particular instance do I find the overseas dominions or their representatives other than Canada having taken the precaution to increase tariffs before starting for the conference, nor do they by word or utterance upon any occasion intimate that that was in their minds. That was reserved for this government, which took the precaution, as my right hon. friend stated to the house this afternoon, to increase the tariff in order that they might have something to bargain with. Then the Prime Minister said further: We did exactly what Mr. Robb, when he was negotiating the Australian treaty would have done had he not been prevented by members of his own party. Will any hon. gentleman claim that the Hon. Mr. Robb ever by word or deed indicated an intention to raise the tariff against Great Britain or any of the overseas dominions? Never on any occasion did he do so. That was not Mr. Robb's proposal, and my right hon. friend needs to be put right on that point. Mr. Robb's proposal was to increase the general tariff in order to give the Australians a preference in our market, but by no process of reasoning can my right hon. friend claim that he assumed the mantle of Sir Wilfrid Laurier or the Hon. Mr. Robb, both departed, when he took upon himself the responsibility of increasing the tariffs against Great Britain. Is it not strange to see the means taken by the present government for the purpose of increasing Canadian trade at a time when, heaven knows, it needs to be taken care of if ever it did? What did we do at the short session? We were hurrying through in order that these envoys might go from Canada to the conference to do something in the interests of Canada. We expected them at that session to do something in the interests of this country, but what did they do? The first thing they did was to take printed and dyed cotton fabric, which we were importing from Great Britain to the extent of \$4,000,000 worth and on which we had a British preference of 20 per cent, and to increase that to 22½ per cent and add a specific duty of three cents a pound. On woollen yarns, of which we imported from Great Britain \$1,000,000 worth, they decreased the duty from 12½ per cent to 10 per cent but added a specific duty of ten cents a pound. On worsteds and serges, on which we had a duty of 27½ per cent, under the reductions that we had put into effect only the previous May,