

possible for the dismemberment of the empire that might come later? My right hon. friend knows that his words are going to be made use of by a political party in Great Britain in the next campaign. Can anything worse be conceived in relation to the interests of the empire as a whole than that the name of this country should be dragged into the political controversies of England in an effort to influence the British electorate one way or the other? And if a change in British fiscal policy ever did come about by Canada's name being injected into Great Britain's domestic affairs, and if later times became bad due to other causes, or of the fiscal change itself, what would likely become of the relations of the different parts of the empire one to the other once an effort was made to change a bargain that had grown out of conditions forced in that way?

There are many people to-day who are questioning very much in their minds whether there can be any future conferences between different parts of the empire unless there is a pretty clear understanding that this kind of thing is never going to be repeated. I doubt if it will be found that any government will go into conference with another government, unless above all the right of every country to have its own fiscal policy is upheld by all. Why, Mr. Speaker, one of the sections of this very conference in England was working on certain resolutions growing out of the conference of 1926; and what was it that the conference of 1926 laid down? It laid down a definition of the present position of the different dominions and Great Britain. How was that position described? It is set out very clearly in the Balfour report, which has been endorsed by this very government while it was negotiating in Great Britain. What does that report say? With respect to Great Britain and the dominions it says:

Their position and mutual relation may be readily defined. They are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

In other words, you have there a distinct statement that each part of the empire has the right to make its own fiscal policy, that it must be so recognized and that there shall be no coercion in any particular way with regard to it. Indeed, it seems part of the irony of fate that it should have been one of Sir John A. Macdonald's ministers who took this very position as long ago as before confederation. My right hon. friend

likes to speak of his policy as the national policy of Sir John A. Macdonald, but one of Sir John Macdonald's ministers made very clear to the British government just prior to confederation that Canada would not stand for any dictation on the part of Great Britain with respect to her tariff. That was as long ago as 1859. Let me read from the communications sent by Sir Alexander Galt to the Duke of Newcastle, who at that time was Colonial Secretary. Here is what Sir Alexander Galt, Sir John A. Macdonald's minister of Finance of that day, said:

Respect to the Imperial government must always dictate the desire to satisfy them that the policy of this country is neither hastily nor wisely formed; and that due regard is had to the interests of the mother country as well as of the province. But the government of Canada, acting for its legislature and people, cannot, through those feelings of deference which they owe to the Imperial authorities, in any manner waive or diminish the right of the people of Canada to decide for themselves both as to the mode and extent to which taxation shall be imposed. Self-government would be utterly annihilated if the view of the Imperial government were to be preferred to those of the people of Canada. It is, therefore, the duty of the present government distinctly to affirm the right of the Canadian legislature to adjust the taxation of the people in the way they deem best, even if it should unfortunately happen to meet the disapproval of the Imperial ministry.

I never thought the day would come in this parliament, Mr. Speaker, when it would fall to the lot of any member of this House of Commons to protest against a Canadian ministry in its attempt to coerce a British ministry, but since that day has come there appears to be an element of poetic justice in the circumstance that I have the privilege of being the first to make that protest. I do make it very strongly indeed, that any ministry from Canada should seek, by means of coercion, to influence the government of Great Britain with respect to any matter of policy which is entirely within its own rights. If we cherish autonomy in our own country; if we respect it; if we wish to maintain it, it will be only by our adopting an attitude towards others which we will expect to have adopted towards ourselves. What would my right hon. friend say were Mr. Ramsay MacDonald or Mr. Lloyd George or Mr. Churchill or any other British public man to come to Canada and denounce the policy of protection, saying it was essential that we should have free trade in order to save the empire? He would be the first to tell him never to come back to this country again, and we would have the press from one end of this country to the