

the cost of living are to be increased, as they certainly will be under this legislation, how are those engaged in the primary industries of Canada to hold their own in world competition in foreign markets? This legislation cannot do other than immediately to have an adverse effect upon the trade of Canada. I need not go into the larger economic law which is familiar to everyone, that in the long run exports must be paid for by imports. That is something which is well understood. What ought to be equally obvious is that, world competition being what it is to-day, in the interest of the home market itself it behooves us to see that in every way possible the cost of production and the cost of living which enter into the cost of the articles which are exported from the country, are kept at as low a figure as possible. This legislation will increase the cost of production; it will also increase the cost of living and it will tend vitally and materially to restrict the trade of the country. It will tend to destroy the home worker. Instead of expansion we will have stagnation.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) was very eloquent throughout the recent campaign with respect to the sufferings of women and children. I ask him: How does he expect to relieve the sufferings of women and children in this country this winter when by the legislation which he is now introducing he is increasing the cost of their clothing, their boots and shoes, their fuel, their food, and their shelter, all of the things in fact which sooner or later it is necessary for them to have in order to continue their day to day existence? The effect of this legislation will be materially to add to such distress as there may be among the great body of consumers throughout this country. My hon. friend, if, I am not greatly mistaken, will receive a surprise when before long the housewives of Canada begin to estimate the effect of his tariff changes on their household budgets. When they find everything that comprises the purchases being made for the household being increased in the artificial manner in which my hon. friend's legislation is calculated to increase them, and when to this he adds the feeling of those who are on salaries or receive wages, he will discover in this country an extent of protest the like of which he has never contemplated.

I have only one further word, and that is to repeat with emphasis what I said a moment ago about this legislation being introduced on the eve of the imperial conference. The Prime Minister well knows that there is no problem quite so serious for Canada at the present time as that of the marketing of our western grain and of surplus farm products

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

generally. He knows that the purchasing power of the middle west, in the last analysis, will determine the extent to which other branches of industry will thrive, and that this depends in very large part on the degree to which we can secure a market overseas for the grain of western Canada. He knows that many of the markets which we formerly had are closed or are being closed against us to-day, for instance, the markets of France, of Germany and of Italy. He knows also that protection is no cure for unemployment. He has only to look across the border in the United States, the most highly protected country in the world and see how extensive unemployment is there, to know that protection is no cure for unemployment. One would have felt my hon. friend, at least on the eve of a great economic conference which is to consider matters of trade within the empire, would have thought it desirable on the part of his government, and on the part of this parliament as representing the people of Canada, to have maintained toward Great Britain an attitude of a character calculated to meet a hearty response from the people of the British Isles to such demands as he might reasonably make for the improvement in trade between the two countries. How can he expect to get from the British government or the British people any response in the way of opportunities for increasing our markets in Great Britain when his last step before he leaves Canada is to raise the duties against British goods coming into this country, and his first word when he reaches the British Isles is to announce the extent of the increases which he has made? This is a most extraordinary proceeding on the part of my hon. friend. It may be he has in mind blasting or blazing or bargaining as a result of the steps he has taken, but I would like to repeat to him what I said before that I think he will find those particular methods are of very little avail as within the British Empire itself, and that only through voluntary cooperation and an attitude of friendship and good will are we likely to achieve much in the way of permanent development of inter-imperial trade.

Mr. LAVERGNE: What response did the right hon. gentleman ever get?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Great Britain takes very much more from Canada than we begin to take from her, and that trade has reached the proportions it has in view of the attitude which we have taken toward Great Britain. May I say this. We heard in a previous election a good deal with respect to "the parting of the ways". We heard some-

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

Speeches-1922 - 1932

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA