

preference was gone into by a Committee, at Mr. Bruce's request, including members of the present Government. The Committee found the various alternatives absolutely unworkable and undesirable. The method of subsidies from the British Government was declared to be impracticable and unfair as between various Dominions; the method of import licenses would create uncertainty and confusion with the maximum of friction; the method of state purchase and price control would be cumbrous, expensive, and unworkable. It is not a promising alternative that is offered; the possibilities of entanglement in British politics, of friction between the various Dominions and with foreign countries, are very marked.

It is conceivable that an alternative might be found in subsidies to vessels trading with the Dominions, but such a plan would be very complicated.

The appropriate answer to the cable might be found in Mr. Asquith's comment when Mr. Baldwin introduced his resolution re preference on dried figs, raisins, etc. "In the name of the Prophet, figs!" An alternative reply, however, is outlined below:

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