

said publicly in London before coming away, that I believe from the Canadian point of view the merit of the conference will lie not so much in a statement of what has been gained as in the statement of what has been attained and is now acknowledged to be altogether beyond debate. I think it is true that all the great charters of freedom in British history have for the most part not purported to introduce anything new or revolutionary. They have purported to be a statement of those rights which the citizens of the day believed were theirs and which they regarded as established. They were a formal statement which could be appealed to by future generations as indicating the point of agreement that had been reached with respect to the several matters with which they dealt. In that particular, I believe the work of this conference so far as the statement of inter-imperial relations is concerned, will take its place in history, by the side of those great charters which have stood in one form or another for a larger freedom. I believe this great conference, once party controversy is removed and we get a true perspective of it, will stand out in history as a conference which has revealed how broad, deep and enduring within the British Empire are the foundations of national autonomy and imperial unity.

In listening to my hon. friend the leader of the opposition I had intended, when five or ten minutes to six arrived, to conclude my remarks with this topic which I thought would be also his last. Prior to that moment my hon. friend, it seemed to me, had been careful to avoid much in the way of controversy arising out of the recent political campaign and had been more or less guarded with respect to the statements he made. At ten minutes to six, however, for some reason best known to himself, he launched out in direct fashion in an attack upon myself. Amongst other things, he spoke of a constitutional issue that had been put forward by myself and others as an important issue in the campaign, but which according to his view really did not amount to anything. He went on to say a number of things which even in that short space of time I found it necessary to take exception to. If, therefore, I touch at the moment upon the constitutional issue which he has brought up, he has only himself to thank for it. It is I think important, in view of the remarks which my hon. friend made, that with respect to the constitutional issue my own position and the position of the present administration should be made perfectly clear.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

May I say to him, first of all, that when he speaks of the misapprehensions people in the old country appear to have been under at the time of the last general election, I could tell him of a good many, and I could tell him pretty conclusively of the reasons therefor. Without doubt the propaganda of my hon. friend and his friends in the last campaign did mislead the British public considerably. It misled the British public in more respects than one. The British public were sadly misled by the Conservative press of this country through cabled despatches to the effect that a Conservative government was going to be returned in this country by an enormous majority. In that particular the British public were quickly undeceived once the election took place.

May I say that I think it important that in our political discussions we should have some regard to the representations made not only because of their effect upon our own electorate, but also because of the effect which is likely to be produced abroad. My hon. friend spoke about annexation to the United States. I would like to know when in the recent campaign a single member of the Liberal party ever uttered one sentence which was capable of being construed as a desire for annexation to the United States. On the other hand, I say that hon. gentlemen opposite over and over again in different parts of this country did all they possibly could to have the citizens of this country believe that members of the Liberal party were in favour of annexation. And what was the result? The people of Canada knew better, they understood the truth. They were not deceived by this propaganda. But as my hon. friend has said, when my colleague and I arrived in the old country, we found the people of Great Britain thinking there was a great question on this continent, namely that of the possibility of the annexation of Canada to the United States. It was all the result of Tory propaganda—nothing more and nothing less.

My hon. friend says that there was really no constitutional question. Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what he has in his mind as the question that really influenced the electorate most in the last campaign, but I believe that it was the constitutional question, perhaps not the question in the form in which he would like to phrase it, but in the form in which it actually arose.

I do not believe there is an episode in Canadian history that will stand out as such