

This market we want and for it we are willing to pay, by giving in the Canadian market a preference for British goods.

First, we must approve or reject the principle. I put the question definitely to you, and definitely it should be answered. There is here no room for compromise and there is no possibility of avoiding the issue. This proposed preference should not be considered as a step towards Empire free-trade. In our opinion Empire free-trade is neither desirable or possible. I offer to the mother country, and to all other parts of the empire, a preference in the Canadian market in exchange for a like preference in theirs, based upon the addition of a ten per centum increase in prevailing general tariffs or upon tariffs yet to be created.

This obliged England to come to a decision as regards this problem which she had been seeking to solve without however taking it.

If she refused, the dominions felt free to follow the course which they deemed best under the circumstances.

The Prime Minister's proposal was broad enough to satisfy the claims of all parties with the exception perhaps of those who were intent on establishing free trade between all the component parts of the empire. It would have been absurd to aspire to the latter, because "economically speaking," it is unsound. The answer was not long in forthcoming. Mr. Neville Chamberlain, in January, 1932, referring to the coming Imperial economic conference, stated:

His Majesty's government attaches extreme importance to this conference, and it intends to bring to bear a firm determination to conclude agreements susceptible of considerably increasing the inter-imperial trade. It is evident that the dominions no more question our right to levy customs duties in our own interests, either to create revenues or restrict imports, than we have questioned their right to do the same.

This was a straight and clear cut statement. England abandoned in practice her century-old policy of free trade. England found it necessary to secure a market for her basic industries, and the dominions likewise for their farm products.

Those opposed to this policy contended that the proposals made by the right hon. Prime Minister would not materialize.

To-day, political opponents who proclaimed that this policy was impracticable, note that the mother country and the other dominions have understood the soundness of the views of the one who at present is looked upon as one of the most illustrious statesmen of the empire.

The weakness of the Roman empire was that no one seemed to realize that the integral parts which comprised it were developing and drawing their source of strength from the very principles which had built up Rome's

[Mr. Laurin.]

greatness, and that they naturally aspired to emulate her. The disintegration which resulted forms a period in history which serves as our best guidance. We are acquainted with the dissensions which broke up each of its component parts and caused the fall of Rome's greatness.

England, on the contrary, conceded the dominions' right to independence; at the Imperial conference of 1926, she acknowledged "that they were component parts of this society of autonomous communities, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another as regards their domestic or external affairs." Ever since then England relied more on the dominions which were taking a more active part in the world's trade movement. It was to avoid the disintegration of the empire and dissensions among the nations which comprise it that our Prime Minister invited England and the British commonwealth of nations to lay the foundations of this new society which had a similar aim and found their own strength, not only in sentimental ties, but also and especially in their mutual and material interests.

Called upon, sir, as a Canadian to take part in the erection of this new edifice, I feel it necessary to extend my entire cooperation because it ensures our ethnical survival, draws us closer into this British commonwealth, gives us more authority in our dealings with our neighbours to the south, and by the building of the St. Lawrence waterway will ensure our material and social dealings with them, thus affording us to act as a link between the British commonwealth and the community of American nations as a guarantee both of peace of the world and of its prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I listened presently to the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Davies) while he was reviewing most of the measures mentioned in the speech from the throne, which have my whole-hearted approval; however, before resuming my seat, may I be allowed to extend to the right hon. Prime Minister the assurance of my deep gratitude for the great honour which he has kindly bestowed on the people of the constituency of Jacques Cartier in inviting their humble representative to second the address in reply to the speech from the throne. Wherefore, sir, I am pleased to second the motion of my hon. colleague from Athabasca.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is not possible to look in your direction without observing the greeting which hon. members opposite have extended to one of their num-