

have used, that you at least have forgiven me for those human failings, realizing that at any rate I had a firm intention of giving effect to all those qualities which you would have your chairman possess, but which he too well knows he does not.

I think I may say to you that it has been a very great pleasure as well as a high honour to have had the opportunity of presiding over this Conference. The souvenir which you have presented me I shall always value. Like most other things connected with this Empire, it will be valued not for its material worth but for what it represents, what it stands for, those ties of sentiment and goodwill which demonstrate the heart of a people. I do not think that I have had that ability to attend to detail which you, Mr. Baldwin, have suggested, for I did not have the slightest notion or intimation, direct or indirect in any way, that this was to be done. It came to me as a very great shock and, shall I say, a most pleasurable surprise. I think, Lord President, that I might correct you in one regard. We did not have the silver salver to present to you when we congratulated you on your birthday: it has been made since. In spirit we then presented it to the Lord President and were able to have it manufactured, in the meantime, out of Canadian silver, with these maple leaves about it.

Listening to the observations you have made, I think I might be permitted to say one thing. I have only one regret, and it is a deep regret to me personally, that one of our Dominions represented at the Conference may have at times experienced slight—very slight—feelings of diffidence. But though the Irish Free State delegation may have experienced such feelings—they were never expressed—they were purely official, for they have established as a result of the Conference the most cordial relations between themselves and, without exception, everyone of the delegations here assembled. I should like to express the hope that these cordial relations so firmly established here may pave the way for the solution of their difficulties.

It was forty-one years ago last January, when I was a very much younger man than I am now, that I participated in an election for my then professor, the Dean of Dalhousie Law School at Halifax. I recall, as vividly as though it were this moment, an extract which I read from a speech of the late Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain. My mind has never wavered from the view that, in some form of economic unity, would be found the true solution for many of the difficulties of our Empire, and I do regard it as a matter of great satisfaction that I have been privileged, under Providence, to see these agreements executed to-day; for they constitute a definite advance towards closer Empire economic association. Because of this, we may fairly lay claim to an achievement greater than that which any other Conference can claim.

The fundamental difficulty heretofore preventing the consummation of an agreement founded on the principle for which we have stood, has now been removed. We have commonly acknowledged that Empire association can be based advantageously upon the principle of reciprocal preferences, and by our several agreements have evidenced our belief that these preferences ensure the greatest benefits when they are predicated upon a general Empire tariff plan.

The agreement between the United Kingdom and Canada has affirmed in principle the proposals made by the Government of this country upon the opening day of the Conference. On the one hand, Canada maintains existing preferences in the United Kingdom and secures the extension of that principle to our natural products. On the other hand Canada balances these advantages by granting such tariff concessions as will place the United Kingdom manufacturers on a basis of fair competition with domestic industries, having regard, of course, to such factors as the relative costs of production.

The operation of this principle is assured through the employment of the Tariff Board created last year by the Parliament of Canada, the function of which will be to conduct such inquiries as will enable Parliament to adjust tariffs on the basis, so that, compatible with reasonable protection to our industries, the consumer will enjoy the maximum benefits ensuing upon a broader exchange of Empire products.

We have, moreover, decided upon the principle that this agreement must be safeguarded from unfair competition from foreign countries, and the United Kingdom, by the exclusion of such unfair competition, ensures effective operation of this agreement. These provisions offer an assurance against further attack upon our standards of living.

The Canadian Government has therefore succeeded through reciprocal concessions in manifesting the principle that protection as we see it in this country can be used as an instrument of national policy to secure an equaliza-