

Sir Charles does not seem to appreciate the situation. The new tariff is in force.

Sir, that makes it a thousand times worse. When you are shown that it is impossible for you to do a certain thing, that it would be a theft, that it would be a robbery, that it would be anything you like, and your answer is : Oh, but I have done it ; I do not mind that it is unconstitutional or illegal, I have done it and it is beyond recall ; when such an answer is given what are intelligent people to think ? Yes, Sir, that was the answer given me by the Finance Minister when I told him that this could not be done. He said : Oh, but it is done, and to-morrow morning every customs officer from Cape Breton to Vancouver and on to Victoria on to the shores of the Pacific, will admit British goods at a reduction of one-eighth on the general tariff. Was such an exhibition ever made in the presence of an intelligent Parliament ? I say, that if the Government of which I had the honour to be a member, had come before Parliament with a proposal of that kind, we would have been laughed out of the House, and properly so too. We would not only have subjected ourselves to the derision and contempt of our opponents, but we would have earned as well the derision of our own supporters. For a member of a government under the parliamentary system in one of the great dependencies of the British Crown, to stand in this House and say : We are utterly regardless of anything but our own sweet will and right or wrong, law or no law, treaty or no treaty, constitution or no constitution, we will carry this out ; for him to say that, is unparalleled in the history of a British colony.

There is a feeling throughout Canada, which prevails not in one party but in all parties, of the most ardent desire to do everything that will show our devotion to the British Crown. There is a feeling amongst all our people of intense satisfaction at the very suggestion of anything that will draw more closely together the relations between the mother country and this great Dominion. That feeling, Sir, is abused. It is taken advantage of by hon. gentlemen opposite, who, instead of dealing in a statesmanlike manner with this great question of the unity of the Empire, drawing this great Dominion and the mother country more closely together, take the means of defeating and preventing any such thing being done. Why, Sir, listen to this from the "Globe." It is, in short, rank rebellion on the part of hon. gentlemen opposite, who are putting themselves forward on this occasion as the only exponents of loyal devotion to Great Britain. It says :

The new tariff is in force. Great Britain is getting the benefit of the minimum rates. She may object to getting this advantage over her trade competitors, but how is the objection to be enforced ?

This is precisely the position the hon. gentleman himself took, and he finds that he has apt scholars.

Does Sir Charles Tupper think she will send troops to Canada to compel us to tax her goods as highly as those of the United States ? The situation is somewhat ridiculous for Sir Charles Tupper. Canada controls her own customs-houses, and an order from Downing Street to increase the duties on British goods would hardly go with the collectors of the Dominion, unless countersigned by Controller Paterson.

Why, Sir, it appears, according to this great luminary of the party, from which hon. gentlemen opposite gather so much light and comfort, that it is not a question for the Governor General or for the Imperial Government, whether a British treaty is to be observed in this country, but for Controller Paterson. Well, Sir, nobody in this House has a greater respect, amounting almost to a personal regard, than I have for that hon. gentleman. I have long witnessed his independent action on the floor of this Parliament. I have long ago satisfied myself that whether he does what is right or what is wrong, he does what according to the light he has, he believes to be right and proper. But, to say that any man in this country, I care not who he may be, from the highest to the lowest, is to be placed by the Government of this country in a position to overrule, to violate the constitution of the country, is to say that he can be guilty of an illegal act, an act which has not the force or the sanctity of law. Sir, I will read the words of the treaties which bind and govern us in this case, and if the hon. gentleman had read these treaties a little more frequently, if he had read them earlier, he would have been saved from occupying one of the most humiliating positions that I have ever seen any gentleman occupy during my parliamentary career. The treaty with Belgium says :

Articles, the produce and manufacture of Belgium, shall not be subject in the British colonies to other, or higher, duties than those which are, or may be, imposed upon similar articles of British origin.

Is that plain ? Is that clear ? Is that open to any misunderstanding ? Can any intelligent man say he does not know what that means ? And yet you are saying that you have ordered every custom-house officer in Canada to violate the plain spirit of that law. We are not an independent country, thank God ; we are under the ægis of the British Crown ; and I say that the man who undertakes to flaunt his own illegal and unconstitutional acts upon this country, in violation of that sovereign power to which we all are proud to owe allegiance, is guilty of an act of as great disrespect as it is possible for a citizen of this country to exhibit towards the great parent state. The German treaty declares :

The stipulations of the preceding articles, I. to VI., shall also be applied to the colonies and foreign possessions of Her Britannic Majesty. In