

of special clauses in British commercial treaties with Germany and Belgium, goods from these countries were also included, pending a denunciation of the treaties, which soon took place. As promised in 1897, a further reduction of the tariff took place the following year, increasing the preference to 25 per cent. As the device had proved a very popular one, and its limited application was now well recognized, the wording of the preference was changed from the general to the particular, and the reduction specifically limited to the British Empire, although important sections, such as Australia, have not yet availed themselves of it.

Thus the Canadian preference on British imports was the outcome of no bargain with the British Government, or of no theories as to the advantages of inter-imperial trade. It expressed no sacrifices on the part of Canada for the benefit of the mother country. It was undertaken entirely in the interests of Canada, and as, under the conditions of the time the only advisable direction in which to carry out the repeated pledges of the Liberal Party. Their political opponents strongly criticized the preference on the ground of its being an infringement of the National Policy, and as certain to affect most injuriously the industries of the country. This position has never been given up and is still employed in appeals to the manufacturing interests. But, as soon as it was perceived that the preference was by no means about to accomplish the promised ruin of Canadian industries, the Conservatives shifted their centre of attack, and made a vigorous assault upon the Government for having gratuitously granted to the mother country a valuable concession without exacting any sacrifice in return.

This criticism, it will be observed, proceeded upon