

# House of Commons Debates.

THIRD SESSION—SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

SPEECH OF HON. G. E. FOSTER, D.C.L., M.P.

## REPLY IN CLOSING BUDGET DEBATE

TUESDAY, 28th FEBRUARY, 1893.

Mr. FOSTER. An apology is certainly due to the House, after ten days of a long discussion upon this tariff policy, for asking it at this late period in the discussion to listen a second time to any remarks from myself. However, it becomes necessary that I should say a few words, not only in reply to my hon. friend who has just sat down, but also in reply to several points which have been raised by hon. gentlemen who have spoken from the beginning of the debate until this time. Happily, I am not under obligation to occupy the attention of this House at very great length in that respect, for neither the cogency nor the novelty of the arguments which have been addressed to the House by hon. gentlemen opposite call for, in most cases, any lengthy reply; and I must also say that most of those arguments have been fully, fairly and completely met, not only many times before in this House, but during this present debate by hon. gentlemen who sit on this side.

### IS IT FREE TRADE?

First, I wish to pay my respects for a few moments to the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat. My hon. friend has been going about the country sounding the praises and trumpeting the coming triumph of free trade. To-night his vaunted free trade with all its breadth of vision and majesty of thought has resolved itself into trade with one country, to the exclusion, by restrictions, of trade with every other in the world. Before his Toronto and Hamilton audiences he breathed the spirit of a wider atmosphere. He pointed to the battlefields of the United States, and he declared that there had been fought and won the second victory, not for "freedom of trade" as he haltingly tells us to-night, but for "free trade" and rising on the height and expanding on the

breadth of that glorious victory for free trade in the United States, he unfolded the curtains of prophecy and declared that the third great country in the world to adopt free trade would be the Dominion of Canada. But to-night, Sir, my hon. friend talks small, very small, indeed. His vision is blinded to the wonderful commerce of Great Britain, his vision is blinded to the wonderful scope of a commercial world beyond the seas in every other country in the globe, and he is willing, for the sake of unrestricted free trade with the United States to raise a Chinese wall against Great Britain and every other country in the world. For in all his long speech to-night has he used two paragraphs of argument in favour of free trade, and has not his whole speech been an apology for unrestricted reciprocity, upon which he has already met significant defeat and upon which he will receive significant defeat yet in the future? The hon. gentleman did several things to-night. He was pleasant and sometimes witty, but at no time very forceful in his remarks or his arguments, if I am able to judge. He told a very good story about King James, but he showed he did not properly appreciate it, because he made the application wrongly. He should have made the application to himself and his friends, who have brought up these theories year after year, from commercial union to continental free trade, and although the people have not agreed with them, although the people have rejected them, although the people have conclusively resolved against them by their votes, yet hon. gentlemen opposite, like King James, still declare that these exploded theories are the only true ones, and they still deploy them before the public view again and again.

### THE EXODUS.

The hon. gentleman found fault with a new law of gravitation, which, he said, I have dis-