

ment ceased to give weight to the considerations which at first caused it not to accede to the treaty.

Mr. FISHER. Because that question was settled long ago. When the preference to Great Britain was established and the Belgium and German treaties were denounced, the question of the applicability of the most favoured nation clause to Canada was practically settled and there was no longer any doubt.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. It was open to this country to accede to that treaty long after the Belgium and German treaties were denounced, was it not?

Mr. FISHER. No, we never could accede to it since about August, 1897. We had to enter into new negotiations with Japan as the period during which we could adhere to the treaty expired then and we had no opportunity of acceding to it.

Mr. STOCKTON. Do I understand the hon. minister to say that the people of this country took no interest in the question of preferential trade relations between the mother country and the colonies? If that be the statement he made, is he aware that the legislature of New Brunswick, two sessions ago, passed unanimously a resolution in favour of such trade relations?

Mr. FISHER. I do not think I said that. I said that the farmers of Canada were not worrying over a preference in the motherland for their food products because they have a preference there to-day. They are selling all their goods there profitably and are so busy producing those goods that they are not worrying over the way they are sold in Great Britain.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN (South York). If the hon. gentleman thinks the farmers of this country are not worrying to get all they can in the British market, to get the full advantage of the preference, why did he within the last six months withdraw the bonding privileges under which Canadian packers imported American hogs into this country and slaughtered them and sold them in England as the products of Canada.

Mr. FISHER. If the hon. gentleman wishes me to answer, I think I can tell him.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. When the hon. minister says that the farmers of this country are not worrying about the English market and do not want all they can get in the English market, his own conduct belies his words because he has been withdrawing that bonding privilege in order that Canadian shippers may have the full advantage of the English market.

I wish, Mr. Speaker, to discuss for a few moments the address which has been moved this afternoon and as this is the opening of the session, I take this occasion—seeing

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

that no one else has taken it—to welcome here the gentleman who has just been elected from Maisonneuve as the representative of labour in this parliament. It is time that the labouring people of this country elected more of their own class to parliament, and I hope the good work has only begun, and that not only Montreal will send more representatives of labour to this parliament but also Toronto and other cities. Something happened in England quite recently. That was a general election in which democracy triumphed, and the greatest thing in connection with that triumph of democracy was the election of a great number of labour candidates. Among them there was elected a man named John Burns—a man who has been identified with municipal ownership of the great utilities of England, and the Liberal party in that country when the opportunity came to them, made John Burns, this representative of labour, a prominent member of the cabinet. In Canada, however, the Liberal party are ashamed of the principle of public ownership. They repudiate it and take the side of the trusts and great corporations against labour.

There was another significant thing in that election in Great Britain and it turns on an important question discussed this afternoon. One of the characteristics of that election was this, that the late government was destroyed because it saw fit to attempt to coerce the great nonconformist body of England in the matter of education. Too little attention has been paid in this country to that phase of that election, but the great fact remains that the Conservative government which saw fit to coerce the nonconformist body in England in the matter of education was destroyed and put completely out of office as no other government has been for many a day in the motherland.

We have been told by the first minister and others that there is practically no program for this session and that we are to be here for a very few weeks. We are to go away and come back in the fall and complete our labours, and the labour we are then to undertake is simply the revision of the tariff. But what are we here for? Are we here to transact the public business of the country or not? Are we here to earn that large appropriation which has been made by parliament for the payment of members, namely, three-quarters of a million dollars? Is that appropriation now to be paid to the members of this parliament when apparently, from what has been said this afternoon, there is nothing for us to do. And there is nothing for us to do simply because one member of the government happens to have met with a personal affliction. I do not think we are here under any such understanding. The people of this country expect us to transact the public business, and there is any amount of public