

a bountiful harvest, my hon. friend claimed that as the work of the administration, but he will not admit that the present condition of trade and commerce and the present prosperous condition of the country is in the slightest degree attributable to the government or to its policy. The hon. gentleman complained that there was nothing said in the speech from the Throne about the fast line of steamers. My hon. friend had that subject before him and, if I remember rightly, an appropriation was taken to establish a fast line of steamers many months before my hon. friend went out of office. He accomplished nothing. He tried to do something, but he did not succeed, and he must not be surprised if, under the circumstances, the negotiations which the government have undertaken, and which they have been carrying on, have not yet been completed. My hon. friend speaks of the matter of a Pacific cable and of better trade relations with the Australian colonies. I am not complaining, nor am I expressing any dissent from the views my hon. friend has addressed to this assembly in respect to these matters. I would be very far indeed from expressing any opinion that it was not important to extend our trade with the other portions of the empire, in so far as the elements for mutual exchange exist between them and us, I think it is very important that the work should be accomplished. And I am ready to go this far: I am ready to say to my hon. friend that when he succeeded in bringing about the intercolonial conference some few years ago, he did a very good thing, not only for this country but for the empire, because it brought men from the different colonies of the empire together, and the mere hearing and discussion of matters of common interest among them could not do otherwise than confer a substantial benefit upon them. The union—the common brotherhood; the union of the common interest; the importance of securing, maintaining and upholding the unity of the empire were matters of no little consequence, and I did my hon. friend full credit for having initiated that matter and for all that he accomplished. Let me say more: My hon. friend has expressed sentiments here to-day with regard to protection and with regard to the promotion of industries by a system of taxation—of burdensome taxation, and it always seemed to me extraordinary that while he fully

appreciated the importance of imperial and intercolonial intercourse, he did not seem to appreciate this fact that the fiscal regulations which he was urgently advocating stood in the way of accomplishing the most beneficial results that could flow from such a system. My honourable friend's patriotism led him to decry closer relations between different portions of the empire. My honourable friend's little England view in this regard led him to erect a Chinese wall around this country as far as he could, and tended to make Canada a close preserve for one class of the community against the other classes. I am not going to follow my honourable friend in the discussion on the tariff changes. Some changes have been made and those changes are all in the direction of freer trade and less restricted intercourse. My hon. friend has spoken to-day of the importance of trade between different portions of the empire, and he has referred to views expressed by the Duke of Devonshire, and what in very vague terms would have been accomplished if Sir Joseph Chamberlain's views had been seconded and he had been encouraged to pursue the line on which he set out. But what that line is I do not precisely know, nor do I think my hon. friend is any better informed than I am. That Mr. Chamberlain would have agreed to impose duties against all the rest of the world and to establish free trade between the different portions of the empire, I do not think and I do not believe. I am of opinion that Mr. Chamberlain would be very far from making such a proposition. I believe it for this reason, that if he had made it it would have been impossible for him, in the present state of public opinion in England, to have remained in public life. He could not have maintained his position as a member of any government, whether it be a radical government such as he favoured when he first entered public life, or the government of Lord Salisbury. I do not care what government you look at in the mother country, you will find it favoured unrestricted trade. The people are unanimously in favour of such a policy, and Mr. Chamberlain, as a man not desiring to render himself wholly useless in the public opinion of the country, as it exists for the time being, could not and would not commit himself to a proposition of that kind. There was this difference between the views advocated by my hon.