

ence has been made to these ; but speaking for myself, I say that nothing impressed me more favourably than the speeches made by the Premier in France. He was there amongst people who spoke his native language, people of his own origin, and there was a natural temptation to say the thing which would please those people ; but on every occasion when the Premier made an important speech in France he took care to inform his hearers that he and his countrymen here in Canada were loyal to England, that they admired the British system and had no desire whatever to change their allegiance, and it seems to me that for that he certainly deserves our thanks. The hon. leader of the opposition in discussing His Excellency's speech set very little store upon the preferential feature of the tariff. I think it is a matter of very serious consequence. When it was being discussed last year the hon. gentleman took the same ground, but the results have shown that my hon. friend was mistaken. Facts, as they say, are stubborn things, and the facts are all against the hon. gentleman. The fact is, that while the party of which the hon. gentleman was for some time leader, and which he now leads in this House, had been expressing for years their great anxiety to secure the denunciation of the German and Belgian treaties ; they had so managed things, had so loaded their propositions with conditions, that they made no progress whatever in the desired direction ; and this preferential clause in the tariff of 1897, small as the hon. gentleman tries to represent it as being, has succeeded in bringing about that which the conservative leaders had been professing their anxiety to bring about for so many years. It secured in a very short time the denunciation of the German and Belgian treaties. Perhaps some hon. gentlemen may say that I have no authority for the statement which I make, but I have the very best authority which I shall with the indulgence of the House, quote. I have in my hand an English blue book, the " Proceedings of a conference between the Secretary of State for the colonies and the premiers of the self-governing colonies at the colonial office, London," in June and July, 1897. I find that Mr. Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, deals with this matter of the commercial relations between England and the colonies. It will be seen that he takes an entirely different

views of that question from the view taken by the hon. leader of the opposition in this House. He speaks about a Zollverein and says :

This is a matter upon which at the present time, rather than suggest any proposals of my own, I desire to hear the views of the gentlemen present.

According to the hon. gentleman from Calgary, the Colonial Secretary had views of a very pronounced character, but he is represented here as being desirous of hearing the views of the colonial premiers. However, that is not the paragraph to which I desire more particularly to direct the attention of hon. gentlemen. The proposal which I desire to call attention to is this : he is speaking now of the denunciation of the treaties with Germany and Belgium, and he goes on to say :

It should be borne in mind that that is, for us, a most important question. Our trade with Germany and Belgium is larger than our trade with all the colonies combined. It is possible that if we denounce those treaties, Germany and Belgium would endeavour. I do not say whether they would succeed, but they might endeavour to retaliate, and for some time at any rate, our commercial relations with these two countries might be disturbed. Therefore, a step of that kind is one that can only be taken after the fullest consideration, and in deference to very strong opinion, both in this country and in the colonies.

Now this is the point to which I wish particularly to attract attention :

Now the question is brought to a practical issue, or may be brought to a practical issue, by the recent action of Canada.

It is not the action of the former Conservative Government of Canada, nor of the Colonial Conference, nor anything of that kind, but the recent action of Canada.

As all are aware, Canada has offered preferential terms to the mother country, and Germany and Belgium have immediately protested and claimed similar terms under the treaty. Her Majesty's Government desire to know from the colonies whether, so far as they are concerned, if it be found that the arrangements proposed by Canada are inconsistent with the conditions of those treaties, they desire, that those treaties shall be denounced. If that be the unanimous wish of the colonies, after considering the effect of that denunciation upon them as well as upon us, because they also are concerned in the arrangements which are made by these treaties, then all I can say at the present time is that Her Majesty's Government will most earnestly consider such a recommendation from the colonies, and will give to it the favourable regard which such a memorial deserves.

And then he goes on to deal with what Canada has done and adds :

But of course the whole difficulty—

That is the difficulty with respect to other countries which have favoured-nation clauses in their treaties with Great Britain.