

posed upon similar articles of British origin, is absolute and unqualified, and as the United Kingdom has been admitted to the benefit of the Canadian reciprocal tariff, Germany and Belgium are entitled to it also. * * * The Law Officers advise also that on the admission of Germany and Belgium, the benefit of the reciprocal tariff must be extended to all countries entitled in Canada by treaty to most-favoured-nation treatment in tariff matters. Notice was given on the 30th of July to terminate the treaties, and in the meantime effect should at once be given in accordance with the undertaking given by your Ministers to the Law Officers' decision, the excess of duties levied should be repaid on demand. Despatch follows by mail.

That is the answer, that is the humiliation, that is what I consider the disaster; because it can never add to the prowess and standing of Canada when its Government takes a position so adverse, so patently adverse, to great treaties and enactments, and finds afterwards that objections had been fairly taken to it. A better way than that might have been found, and I will point it out by-and-by. But nothing daunted the vallant knight. He came back, wearing the laurels of his defeat with a jaunty air, and was tendered a banquet at Charlottetown. He waxed eloquent while speaking; metaphors and similes crowded into his brain, and he declared:

The germ planted in 1892 has grown and flourished into a green bay tree, and to-day the birds of the air, not only in this country, but in the countries of Europe, are lodged in its branches.

It seems to me that when I read Bible history in my school days—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. FOSTER. And the reckless jollity with which some hon. members meet this remark shows that, judging from themselves, they have little faith in my reading it when I am grown up—it seems to me when I read Bible history, that a green bay tree was something to which the wicked were likened; and my hon. friend, without knowing it, was most appropriate in the simile which he used. But my hon. friend will have a quarrel soon with his right hon. leader, because his leader declared here on Friday that the first step was taken in this matter when he was in England last year and when the treaties were denounced. Now, it appears that his lieutenant declared at Charlottetown that the germ had been planted in 1892, that it had grown for five years until it had come to be this mighty bay tree. And to what purpose was this mighty bay tree prostituted? The birds of the air, not only in this country, but in European countries, nestled in its branches. Later on in his speech the hon. gentleman, wearing still, I say, with a jaunty air, the laurels of defeat, said something like this:

With reference to the preferential trade resolution, he had been appointed to argue the case

Mr. FOSTER.

before the Law Officers of the Crown. He would not weary his hearers with a synopsis of the argument. Suffice to say that he had been successful.

“And now the unity of the Empire is a proclaimed fact, ringing up and down the universe,” he added. My hon. friend has a disposition which I envy him. In success he can smile and be jubilant; in the bitter hours of defeat he smiles equally and is equally jubilant, because he thinks he has been successful even when he has been defeated.

So much, then, with respect to the legal position of the matter. But, Sir, there is something which is more blameworthy than this. The hon. gentlemen opposite created a false impressiion at home, which means much, and abroad, which means more, with respect to this clause in their tariff. The impression they created was that it emanated from the desire largely dominant in the Canadian heart for exclusive trade relations with Great Britain and the British Empire, and they heralded it abroad in Canada and in Great Britain, as being a measure which gave its advantages to Great Britain, and to Great Britain alone. That was the impression which was sought to be created in this country, and which hundreds of thousands of people believed to be the true state of things until the whole matter was sifted and explained. It was the impression it produced in Great Britain, which ran into the Jubilee celebration and which lasted somewhat longer than the celebration, but reached an inglorious end at last when at length the result of the investigation of the facts came to be known. No less a person than Mr. Kendrick Murray, the secretary of the London Chamber of Commerce, says that

The expectation of the traders has undoubtedly been disappointed by the extension to practically all countries, except the United States, of what was previously supposed to be an exclusive British preference.

Mr. Kendrick Murray simply echoes the impression made everywhere and cultivated sedulously in Great Britain, that this was a meed of benefit given solely to Great Britain and her traders. I think, Sir, that it is very unfortunate when hon. gentlemen, because they cannot agree among themselves as to a definition of their policy, add two meanings to it and arrange to adopt either of them by which they will be able at the time to do the most good; to argue that the clause is not preferential exclusively to Great Britain, when they have to meet men in favour of wider commerce; that it is exclusively for Great Britain, when they have to meet the sentiment that asks and longs for the closest exclusive trade relations between Great Britain and all her colonies. It is particularly unfortunate that Great Britain should ever have the experience of finding out that a Canadian Prime Minister and a Canadian Government were