

I do not commend the metre, nor particularly the sentiments, but the opinion is expressed in this doggerel of two lines just as fully as if I had quoted for an hour. If it will not weary the House I should like very much to place on record the opinion which people at a distance have formed of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's tariff and of the present government and their fiscal policy. Pass over the old world and proceed some ten thousand miles away from home into the Australian colonies, for instance, and you will find the newspapers there diagnosing the tariff as correctly as any man could possibly do who has watched it from its inception. I have here a tolerably long article, but it is worth reading. It is from the *Australian Star*, published in Sydney, New South Wales. It was a protectionist colony when I was there a few years ago, but since then they had an election. Hon. Mr. Reed, the present premier, was then leading the opposition, and they had a contest there just as we had an election in this country with Sir Wilfrid Laurier leading the opposition, both upon the same lines exactly. Mr. Reed is an out and out Cobdenite, a free trader pure and simple. He told the people of Australia that if he was elected and Sir George Dibbs was defeated, he would introduce the principle of free trade in its entirety in parliament; and unlike the free traders in Canada he acted up to his promise. The moment the legislature met he abolished the protective principle altogether, placed the taxes upon lands and incomes; and adopted, in fact, a free trade policy pure and simple. That gentleman, when he was in England, might and did very properly, when Lord Hartington, the present Duke of Devonshire, suggested the question of preferential trade with the colonies, repudiate the whole thing. He was honest in his professions. He had carried them out to the letter. He did more than that; he was opposed to what our present premier once designated as "tin-pot titles," he refused to accept any, and went home to Australia as plain Mr. Reed. I instance this to show the difference between the two parties, one in Australia professing free trade principles, and the free trade party in this country. The *Australian Star* in discussing this question recently, used the following language:

When Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Premier of Canada, recently jubilated in England, he was welcomed there, it will be remembered, with unexampled effusion by the free traders as the true apostle of the gospel

according to Cobden. The Cobdenites presented him with a gold medal, as the outward and visible sign of his inward and spiritual free trade grace, and otherwise worshipped at his shrine. And Sir Wilfrid received the acclamations of the faithful with the proud humility of one who knows adoration is his due. He seemed to stand there, the most solitary figure in the empire, outside of Great Britain, lifting his voice and testimony in favour of the only true fiscal faith. He might suffer political martyrdom, but he was strong to do and dare in the sacred cause of free trade. Only a few months previously a general election in Canada had taken place; whilst the main issue in that contest was a dispute about the teaching of religion in the public schools in the province of Manitoba, it was well known that Sir Wilfrid also denounced the fiscal system in operation in the country, and declared that if his party came into office they would sweep away protection.

This accusing thing was stifling the energies of the people, and preventing the proper development of trade and industry, and therefore it was only right that it should be destroyed. At the time Sir Wilfrid Laurier was in London to take part in the Jubilee festivities the English people probably did not know to what extent he had fulfilled the promise to establish free trade in the Dominion, for the newspapers published in Great Britain did not give much information on the subject. They knew, however, that the Canadian parliament had included to the new Tariff Act an admirable provision by which the manufacturers in the mother country were given certain advantages in trading in Canada over manufacturers belonging to foreign lands, and this provision so excited their imagination that they apparently did not take the trouble of ascertaining whether the other provisions in the act were equally liberal from their point of view, or whether, indeed, any real advance beyond the reciprocity arrangement had been made in Canada in the direction of free trade.

The new Tariff Act has recently come into our hands and it is a revelation to us as it must be to the people of England.

As we read its pages the pathetic figure of Free Trade Apostle Laurier fades and is lost alike to imagination and sight. The best that can said of him is "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." For, in truth, Sir Wilfrid Laurier deceived the Cobden Club and obtained its gold medal by using the voice of free trade, while, as for his tariff, no protectionist in this province (New South Wales) even in the wildest of his dreams ever conjured up or ever desired a tariff so thoroughly protectionist as that of the Dominion of "Free Trade" Canada. Examine the schedule of that tariff where you will, from initial "ale" to final "unenumerated goods," and you find a high scale of duties, such as regards New South Wales at least, it has hardly entered into the heart of man to conceive. There is, it is true, a schedule of "free goods"—"articles for the use of the Governor General," "travellers' baggage," "Admiralty charts," "communion plate when imported for the use of the churches," "curling stones," "fossils," and cognate articles not producible in Canada, and certain wares, such as indecent photographs and oleomargarine are prohibited, but with these and a few other exceptions every article imported into that "free-trade" Dominion has to pay heavy duties. Take a few instances: Canned meats, etc., pay 25 per cent ad valorem; mutton and lamb, fresh, pay 35 per cent; paraffine wax candles, 30 per cent; condensed coffee, etc., 30 per cent; apples, 40 per cent; pickles, 35 per cent; books, 30 per cent; buggies, etc., 35 per cent; cotton fabrics, coloured, 35 per cent; ready-made clothing, wholly or in part of wool, 35 per cent, and so on. These, of course, are merely a few instances taken at random of the free trade tariff of Cobden's Canadian disciple, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. These are