

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I do not think in Canada, because in Canada he said they had done it, and now he says they have not done it.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. If my hon. friend quoted me fairly, he would find that I said that we had done it, but by the action of the Imperial authorities, not by any action of ours, it for the moment came to an end.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. But the hon. gentleman forgets that in the position he occupies he ought to have known then, as he knew afterwards—and if he did not know it, I do not know any one else, unless it was the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Sir Louis Davies), who was equally oblivious to the fact—that those treaties were binding. The hon. gentleman said :

If there were no treaties to interfere with us there would be to-day one-eighth off, and on the first of July next there would be another one-eighth off ; but the treaties will check us until the first of August, on which date the two-eighths reduction will have come into operation.

The hon. gentleman knows that it cannot come into operation under his clause even when the treaties are terminated, for he has been told so by the highest authority. The Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain has told the Premier, and he has laid the statement on the Table of the House of Commons, that under that clause or any similar clause, no preference can be given to the United Kingdom, and he has explained why. Because, he says, of a clause in all the most-favoured-nation treaties which England has in the world—and Canada, he says, is bound by many of these treaties: and they cannot be denounced, because there is no period specified for their denunciation. A treaty which has no time specified for its denunciation can only be terminated by war—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Or by common consent. The Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, has explained to the right hon. the First Minister that under no such clause as that can any preference be given to England—why? Because the most-favoured-nation treaties declare that whatever is given by one country to another must be given to every country which has most-favoured-nation treatment. Mr. Chamberlain explained this so plainly that a child of ten years old could understand it. In fact, I was ashamed, almost, when I read the explanation to see the minuteness which he appeared to think necessary in order to make it perfectly plain. He has maintained that Canada cannot give this preference by any such clause as has been put on the Statute-book, which provides that any country which has as low a tariff as the minimum tariff of Canada is entitled to come in, but that Canada must pass an

Act giving that privilege to the goods of Great Britain, nominating and giving it to nobody else. Is the hon. gentleman prepared to do that?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Had not my hon. friend better wait for the budget?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. No, I have the answer now. I have the hon. gentleman here in black and white. I have here his own declaration that that is what they intended by it; and as that is the only means by which they can do it, I take it for granted that they will do it.

But there is a very serious difficulty in my hon. friend's way which he has probably not thought of, and of which, in justice to him, I ought to remind him. A very important interview took place recently, on a very interesting occasion in London, between the right hon. the First Minister and the Cobden Club. On that occasion my hon. friend was decorated with this medal which he seems to value more than the keeping of good faith with the people of Canada, and these are the terms on which that medal was given. Lord Farrer, the most bitter foe of preferential trade that can be found within the British Empire, a most able foe, and one who is so determined a free trader that he denounces every form of reciprocity as one of the most insidious and improper forms of protection, made the speech of presentation, and these are the terms on which my right hon. friend was decorated with the medal :

There is a party amongst us who would willingly discriminate against German and Belgian goods, and who look upon the denunciation of the German and Belgian treaties as a step towards what they have been pleased to call the commercial federation of the Empire—a system under which commercial union in the different parts of the Empire will be fostered by laws excluding or discouraging foreign goods. If this were to be the consequence of what you have done, I need hardly say that we of the Cobden Club would not have been here.

This language is very significant. Lord Farrer went on to say :

It is because we believe that your efforts are founded on the opposite principle, and will be followed by opposite results, that we, followers of Adam Smith and of Peel, of Bright and of Cobden, are here to congratulate and to thank you. You do not ask us to abate one jot of our free trade principles.

An hon. MEMBER. Hear, hear.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Let my hon. friend listen to what follows and see whether he will endorse that statement :—

You ask for no preferential treatment—

I do not hear my hon. friend say "hear, hear" to that, and I am very glad of it, because it proves the accuracy of the "Globe's" statement that every man in Canada, of every class and party, is in favour of preferential trade. Lord Farrer continued :