

and his government in 1897, and forced the abrogation of the Belgian and German treaties. My hon. friend's memory is again entirely at fault, but if my hon. friend will refresh his memory by going back to the reports of the conference of 1897 in England and Mr. Chamberlain's speeches there, he will find that Mr. Chamberlain recounted the efforts which had been made by Canadian governments, Conservatives as well as Liberals, to get the German and Belgian treaties abrogated. He referred also to the action of the Canadian parliament at its recent session and said that up to this time the British government had failed to yield to those demands, and added that it was because the premiers of all the colonies had concurred in demanding the abrogation of those treaties, that Britain consented to apply for their abrogation. It seems extraordinary that the hon. gentleman should take the ground which he has taken, for we are inclined to ask ourselves the question what could there possibly be in this preference to English goods that would create such a demand for Canadian products? What could there be in that very small change to cause a general expansion of trade throughout the world, a change which I never condemned nor found fault with? I think it is quite right. But what we have condemned—what I do condemn and always will condemn on the part of my hon. friend and his colleagues is that when they gave that preference to Great Britain, when they narrowed it down to a British preference at the instance of Mr. Chamberlain, they did not make a reasonable and modest request for something in return for what they were giving away. Instead of that, the premier of Canada, although he was solemnly pledged to the people of Canada in speeches made in this country before the election of 1896 to endeavour to obtain an advantage for Canada in the markets of Great Britain—what did he do? He told the British government and the British people that Canada gave this concession entirely of good will, and without any desire or any wish that anything whatever should be given in return for it.

Hon. GENTLEMEN—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—He made a virtue of necessity.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—Hon. gentlemen seem to applaud that sentiment very much. I have no objection to showing good will to the mother country, but the premier of Canada violated his promises to the people of Canada. On that point there can be no doubt whatever. He put himself on record as being as favourable to a preference in the British market for Canadian products as Sir Charles Tupper was. The 'Globe' said that it was unnecessary for Sir Charles Tupper to be preaching this preference for Canada, because Mr. Laurier was equally favourable to it. Mr. Laurier said the possibilities of that tariff were immense. It meant that our butter, our cheese, our grain, our meat—all those products of our country would get a better price in the markets of Great Britain than those of other foreign countries would receive, because the latter would have to meet a duty from which our products would be exempt. That is what Sir Wilfrid Laurier said in a speech in London, Ont., but when he went to England he threw all that away, and declared that the Canadian government did not want anything in return, and went further and advised the British government and the British people not to depart from their free trade principles, because he said protection had done a great deal of harm in Canada.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Sir Wilfrid Laurier saw it was absolutely impossible—that he might as well have asked for the moon.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—When did this light dawn on the mind of the premier? We know he did not think it impossible when he went to London, Ontario, and made that celebrated speech. He could not have thought it impossible when he went to Toronto and made another speech in the same strain. It could not be that he regarded it as impossible on those occasions. When did the light dawn? Was it when he reached the other side of the Atlantic?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—He always had but one opinion.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I am sorry I cannot at this moment quote the exact language he used, but my hon. friend cannot have forgotten the speeches made by his leaders before the elections of 1896, and how he can stand before this House and say it was al-