

the minds and feelings of hundreds of thousands of the most intelligent and most important men in Canada. When the hon. gentleman said that the tariff was practically going to be the tariff of to-day, he said that which made those who had been inclined at times to doubt the sincerity and honesty of his leaders, who on the most important public occasion he gave his solemn word that the industries of this country would not be disturbed, and led the people to believe there was some faith to be reposed in man after all. My hon. friend accepted that statement, and based his speech on it, because he assumed this monstrosity, to use the language of my classical friend from Oxford, this "amorphous botch" on the hon. gentleman's budget was a thing not of practical utility, but put there as a little soothing panacea for free traders, who were not satisfied with the adoption of that tariff of the day by a party which had pledged itself that the moment it got in power it would wipe out every vestige of protection and give free trade to the country. It is no wonder that the "Globe" in the quotation which I have already submitted states that down to the close of the discussion on the subsequent night, even down to the time when the ex-Finance Minister rose to address the House, no one could quite satisfy himself what the tariff really was. Is it any wonder that people were unable to understand this tariff? Is it any wonder that the "Globe" says that people intimately acquainted with questions of fiscal policy and finance could not quite make out what the hon. gentleman intended? I will read for the information of the House the statement to which I refer, because it cannot too constantly be put before hon. members, as it covers the terms which the hon. gentleman calls the preferential features of the tariff. He said:

That when the customs tariff of any country admits the products of Canada on terms which, on the whole, are as favourable to Canada as the terms of the reciprocal tariff herein referred to, are to the countries to which it may apply, articles which are the growth, produce, or manufacture of such country, when imported direct therefrom, may then be imported direct into Canada, or taken out of warehouse for consumption therein at the reduced rates of duty provided in the reciprocal tariff set forth in Schedule "D."

Does any one know what that means? Could the hon. gentleman himself tell, much less those who heard him? Could any one tell what this jumble of inconsequential words meaning nothing, was intended to represent? The hon. gentleman (Mr. Fielding) must, therefore, excuse my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) for having assumed, as I assumed, that it was impossible that a Finance Minister in the Parliament of Canada should insult—I do not hesitate to use the word—the intelligence of this House by putting such a thing as that before us. We ought to assume that hon. gentlemen opposite have at least some little respect for

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the intelligence of their own followers, if they have none for the intelligence of gentlemen on this side of the House. I defy the members supporting the Government to give any rational explanation of what these words mean. They can mean anything or they can mean nothing, and they were accepted evidently as a soothing syrup to the free traders, who believed in the assertions of the Cabinet Ministers as to their free trade policy. I invite the attention of the Finance Minister to what was said by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, who stated: It is not a preferential tariff at all, there is nothing preferential about it. In that, the Minister of Trade and Commerce contradicts the very words of the Finance Minister. It would appear that these gentlemen had found out from some source or other that they are prohibited from giving Great Britain preferential treatment, and consequently the Minister of Trade and Commerce comes to the rescue of the Finance Minister, and tells him that he did not know what he was talking about when he put this construction on the resolution. The hon. gentleman (Sir Richard Cartwright) tells us, that it is not preferential, that it is open to every country in the world and discriminates against none. Which of these two hon. gentlemen are right? Their statements are as different one from the other as day is from night, and it is important that this House should know which of them gives the true meaning of this extraordinary clause. The Minister of Trade and Commerce tells us, that not only is this so-called preferential tariff open to all the world, but he hopes and expects that the United States of America will be included in it, in addition to Belgium and Germany, and all those nations which have the most-favoured-nation clause in their treaty with Great Britain. Hon. gentlemen opposite ought know, if they do not, that which every tyro knows who has given attention to the discussion of constitutional questions, namely, that they have no power to do what they propose. Is it treating this House with respect, for the Government to gravely propound to Parliament to pass a law which they know they have absolutely no power whatever to enact? Listen to what the "Globe" says, in an article headed "The position of Great Britain:"

This is the central principle of the tariff, and upon it all the batteries of the Opposition will be brought. Already Sir Charles Tupper, with scarcely concealed satisfaction, has expressed his belief that Great Britain will be forced by her treaty obligations to refuse the concessions made. Should the Government have waited to be told by me, that Great Britain cannot permit this to be done? No gentleman should take the position of Minister of Finance in this country, and undertake to deal with questions of such overwhelming gravity, until he has taken the trouble to inform himself with reference to matters of this kind. The "Globe" continues: