

Sir Louis Davies took occasion upon the platform in that riding to assert his conviction that it would be scarcely possible to induce Great Britain to impose a tariff upon her imports even for the benefit of her colonies. It is refreshing to find that no less a person than Hon. G. W. Ross, Ontario's Minister of Education, considers that the chances for obtaining preferential trade are extremely good, and utterly abhors the idea of reciprocity with the United States.

Mr. Ross has no gift of infallibility, but his position on this question seems to be thoroughly sound and practical. He quoted Hon. Joseph Chamberlain's Glasgow speech in which the Colonial Secretary said that "the basis of all true patriotism is preference," and dwelt upon "the surprisingly generous expressions of good will from the press and public men of the mother country, called forth by preference for British goods accorded under the new tariff." In favor of preferential trade with Great Britain Mr. Ross propounded strong arguments which we will sum up as briefly as possible:

- (1) The advantages of the British constitution.
- (2) Confidence of Canadians in the institutions and the political and commercial possibilities of the Dominion. The waning of racial and religious strife.
- (3) That the way is paved for rapid commercial development.
- (4) That preferential trade would induce closer social relations and better understanding of Canada in Britain.
- (5) England's greatness depends on the maintenance of her colonies.
- (6) Her naval supremacy necessitates the permanence of the harbors and coaling stations under her flag.
- (7) The congested settlements of the old country would be relieved and our wild country would be populated. This would mean profits to British manufacturers and to ours.
- (8) Britain would be secure against a lack of food supply in case of war.

Great Britain and the United States are our two great markets, and so as in addition to the reasons for preferential trade the arguments against reciprocity with the United States are set forth. They, too, may be summed up in brief:

- (1) A reciprocity treaty might foster a feeling of dependence of the weaker nation on the stronger which would mar the spirit of Canadian nationality.
- (2) The repeal of such a treaty could be used by the stronger nation as a threat to terrorize the weaker through fear of a loss of trade, and made a lever towards political union.
- (3) We have nearly \$1,000,000,000 invested in canals and railways, and could not justly divert our traffic to American railways and canals. There is also a labor question involved in this.
- (4) A market secured under a treaty is temporary, while Great Britain would be a permanent market for the people of Canada.
- (5) Trade follows the flag and preferential trade would strengthen the Empire.

The Minister of Education is to be congratulated on his splendid statement of these cogent reasons for imperial preferential trade. It is to be hoped that he will not rest content with this contribution to the contest, but that he will enlist under the preferential trade banner and help to fight the good fight. His admitted ability as a thinker, a writer, and

speaker, would make his influence a strong accession to the cause. His arguments in support of the general statement were decidedly convincing. Great Britain imports some \$790,000,000 of food products annually. Of this only about \$100,000,000 worth cannot be produced in Canada, all the other \$690,000,000 worth of edibles can be produced here. Canada wants that trade and will develop to meet its demands. Great Britain should be willing to give us the trade because it would make her independent of any other source of food supply. In order to secure it Canada must have first-class transportation facilities and must produce the various articles of consumption of as good quality as any other country, and place them on the market in good condition in Great Britain.

The Colonial Secretary, the London Times, Sidney Buxton, late under secretary of state for the colonies, Col. Howard Vincent, M.P., Sir Albert Rollit, M.P., His Grace, the Duke of Devonshire, and Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, were all brought under contribution towards proof that in Great Britain the cause has friends.

The Times said:—

It is getting to be understood that free trade is made for man, not man for free trade. . . . The British Empire is so large and so completely self-supporting that it could very well afford for the sake of a serious political gain to surround itself with a moderate fence.

Mr. Buxton said:—

Though, on the whole, I am a free trader, I, for one, do not say it might not be requisite to reimpose certain duties which, in the past, were taken off British importations.

Sir Albert Rollit said:—

I deliberately say that there may be circumstances in which an economic sacrifice may be more than justified for the greatness of the political, social and commercial ends which we have in view.

Mr. Balfour said:—

If the commercial federation of the Empire has a justification at all, that justification is to be found in the fact that it will draw closer together the various distant and far separated members of this great community. If it does that, I say it is no affair of any foreign nation what we do in the matter. They do not consult our convenience in the formation of their tariffs. I am not aware of any reason why we should consult their convenience in the formation of our tariffs.

Canada is being constantly attacked—not from a military, but from a commercial standpoint. The intention of American legislation is very apparently directed against Canada, and expected to cripple us. Every endeavor to remove us from these disadvantages has been remarkably satisfactory. The Washington treaty of 1871 was hardly as disastrous as the Ashburton treaty of 1846, but yet Canada has made the experimental discovery that not even fair play is to be expected from the United States in any international commercial arrangement.

Then, too, there were certain unpleasant occurrences in 1812 and 1866, for Canada cannot see her way clear to take the blame, and which she has not altogether forgotten. Any benefit from the Elgin treaty of 1854 was caused by the American Civil War. We should not forget that commercial interests are apt to lead to political connection. We should keep the arguments adduced by Mr. Ross carefully before us. We should welcome him to our aid, and if he persists frequently, and as energetically as he has done on this first occasion, the