

and to turn his back upon them after they had accomplished the purpose of securing for him his position of power and influence? The hon. gentleman had the opportunity placed in his hands, and I hold in my hand the speech with which he was met by His Grace the Duke of Devonshire at Liverpool on landing, on the very threshold of his entrance into England, on which occasion, as hon. gentlemen know, the Duke of Devonshire made a speech which brought down upon him next morning the denunciation of the extreme free traders and Cobdenites all over the United Kingdom. They declared that he had shown on that occasion that for the purpose of meeting the views of the colonies he was prepared to turn his back on free trade and adopt a preferential tariff between England and her colonies. He said:

Very few disciples of free trade fifty years ago would have believed for a moment that at this time France and Germany would be carrying on an enormous trade under strictly prohibitive conditions, and not only that they would not have opened their markets to us, but they would be competing over us for the possession of as large a portion as possible of the surface of the earth, not for the purpose of opening it up out of the universal benefits of free trade, but for the purpose of excluding from those portions English trade. The world has not become the commercial paradise which was predicted in the early days of free trade opinion, when it was hoped that free trade would bind all the nations of the earth so closely together that it would be a matter of comparatively little importance by whom they were ruled, or under what influence they were governed. We have since learned by painful experience that no old nor new markets are being thrown open to us by the influence of free trade alone, and that if we want to provide for increasing commerce, which is necessary for the support of our increasing population, we must find those markets for ourselves, and must use every opportunity either of expanding or consolidating our colonial possessions.

Here was the evidence, given in the strongest terms, that His Grace was prepared to follow in the lines so admirably laid down by Mr. Chamberlain, of adopting a policy of preferential trade within the Empire. Sir George Turner, the Premier of Victoria, was present on that occasion, and I will read as short an extract as possible from his speech, although I should like to read a longer one, in order to give the House the spirit of the position he occupied:

If proposals be made to us which will show us that the whole of our trade, the whole of our dealings can be on fair, just and equitable terms conducted with Great Britain, we will only be too willing to enter into that bargain, because we know that that will be manifestly for the benefit and advantage of all of us who are part of this great Empire.

The Premier of New Zealand, the Hon. A. J. Seddon, said:

I am proud that it has been reserved to us to listen to the admirable address which His Grace has given this afternoon. Since thirty years

ago, when this matter was first discussed, there has gone forward a movement which will increase in strength and volume until all doubts be removed, and that, instead of that, which you all require going to foreign nations, we can give you that help; we desire to do so. Help us to do it and you are doing your duty to the great Empire to which we all have the honour to belong. Let me remind you of what took place at the conference in London in June last. There the thinking men of our nation, those who command our manufactures, those who command the commerce and trade of our country, showed that they desired to put to the world, and to put to those in charge of Imperial affairs what their views honestly were upon this subject. And he who is at the present moment at the head of colonial affairs—I allude to the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain—said: "Let the colonies come to us with a proposal or proposals, and it shall not be treated in any huckstering spirit." Nothing was done under that until recently, but there was a conference held of the Prime Ministers of Australia at Hobart, and a resolution was passed in which we said that we had not arrived at that stage at which proposals should be made, but that the situation is so grave and serious that, in the interests of the colonies and of the Empire, it should be inquired into.

I regret to say that instead of the right hon. gentleman realizing what every honest man in Canada looked to him for, instead of doing what he had solemnly pledged himself to do, he turned his back upon Canada, he turned his back upon himself, and rejected this very proposal at the outset, which, I have shown, step by step, accumulated such tremendous cogency and force. These are the terms in which he spoke:

I claim for the present Government of Canada that they have passed a resolution by which the products of Great Britain are admitted on the rate of their tariff, at 12½ per cent, and next year at 25 per cent reduction. This we have done, not asking any compensation.

Are there any terms in the English language which the hon. gentleman could have used that could be more opposed to the pledge he had given? Because the whole question was one of compensation, and that was a question which Mr. Chamberlain declared would be decided in no huckstering spirit. If the colonies, he said, would make a proposal to give benefit to Imperial trade, the British Government were ready to consider the advisability of giving that preference to the products of the colonies in the British market which was of such vital consequence to Canada. The right hon. leader of the Government went on to say:

There is a class of our citizens—

Mark, Mr. Speaker, the sneer. What did the "Globe" tell the right hon. gentleman? The "Globe" told him that every man, woman and child who was old enough to know and realize the importance preferential trade would be to Canada was of one opinion, and that was that it was most desirable to get it. And yet we have