

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I think it was withdrawn. But that does not affect Mr. Chamberlain's position.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—The present tariff is a step in that direction.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—We will see about that. Mr. Chamberlain said he saw the germ of a practical solution of the question in that resolution of the Toronto Board of Trade and that being so, I cannot see for the life of me how those gentlemen can attempt to deny that Mr. Chamberlain had committed himself to this question as a practical issue. Now, I have quoted somewhat at length and discussed these two speeches of Mr. Chamberlain's. Then we have a speech by the Duke of Devonshire which was made at the landing of the colonial premiers in England—an address of welcome. 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 expending or consolidating our colonial possessions.

These views are found to be in harmony with the opinions expressed by Mr. Chamberlain on these two notable occasions, before the Canada Club and before the Associated Chamber of Commerce. But if any doubts were held at all as to what the views of Mr. Chamberlain were I think I can quote an authority that is entitled to the respect of the hon. leader of the House and the hon. Secretary of State as showing what the position of Mr. Chamberlain was in regard to this question. I am quoting from a speech made in London, Ont., in 1896, a little before the last general elections by the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, premier of Canada, and this is what he says :

We would have for our goods a preference which would not be given to the goods of another nation.

That practical statesman Mr. Chamberlain has come to the conclusion that the time has come when it is possible within the bounds of the empire for another step to be taken which will give to the colonies in England a preference for their products over the products of other nations.

Here the Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier speaking in London in 1896 complimented Mr. Chamberlain in coming to this conclusion, and said that the time had come when such a step would be taken :

What would be the possibilities of such a step if it was taken. We sell our goods in England. We sell our wheat, our butter, our cheese, all our natural products.

He knew exactly the articles on which preference would come :

But there we have to compete with similar products from the United States, from Russia and from other nations. Just see what a great advantage it would be to Canada if the wheat and cheese and butter which we send to England be met with a preference over similar products of other nations. The possibilities are immense. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain the new and progressive Secretary of the Colonies has declared that the times has come when it is possible to discuss that question. But sir, if England is going to give us that preference England would expect something from us in return. What is it she would expect? England would expect that we would come as closely to her own system of free trade as it is possible for us to come. England does not expect that we would take her own system of free trade such as she has it; but I lay it before you that the thing the British people would expect in return is, that, instead of a principle of protection, we should adopt the revenue form of tariff pure and simple. These are the conditions upon which we can have that boon.

Hon. gentlemen say they have fulfilled these conditions. They tell us sometimes, but rather in bated breath, that they have given us a revenue tariff. Well, if they have, according to Sir Wilfrid, they put themselves in a position to get that boon of preferential trade, and why do they not get it? I will discuss that question later on. The right hon. gentleman, apparently desirous of putting himself further on record in regard to this matter, spoke in Montreal as follows :

In regard to this question of preferential trade I desire to say that Sir Charles Tupper is no more in favour of the idea than I am myself * * * My hope is—nay my conviction is that on the 23rd of June the liberal party will be at the head of the polls, and that it will be the liberal party, with its policy of a revenue tariff, that will send commissioners to London to arrange for a basis of preferential trade.

Well, if I know what occurred at all, I know there was a certain commissioner went to London, the premier himself went there, but it would be the severest irony to say he went there to make a treaty for preferential trade with Canada. It would be entirely