

a view of enabling them to see the nature of the arguments against us; to point out to them that we are already suffering for our adhesion to our purpose of Imperial preference; and to ask whether we are ready to fight it out on that line, no matter how disastrous the consequences. I am among the last to be charged with truckling to the United States, but consideration of reasonable consequences of a preference given by the United Kingdom to Canadian goods as against those going from the United States, cannot and ought not to be disregarded. Our trade with our neighbours last year amounted to about two hundred million dollars; our imports from them being no less than sixty per cent. of our total imports. And the practical question is not whether we believe ourselves to be in the right, but whether we are so clearly, indisputably and demonstrably right that we ought to disregard the contrary view as such an unreasonable and unwarrantable encroachment upon our freedom of action as must be intolerable to us, no matter what the consequences?

For my own part I cannot deny that the German view has much to support it. The Crown Colonies are in every sense a part of the British Empire; but for almost all practical legislative and commercial purposes Canada is not, she legislates for herself. She enacts her own tariff. She hits at Germany (and other nations) without consulting anybody; and if she makes a preferential bargain with the United Kingdom, it will be because she chooses to do so and not because of any constitutional subordination to the United Kingdom.

A preferential system, then, may breed reprisals. That will mean a great deal to the United Kingdom, for her foreign trade is enormous, but relatively it may mean very much more to Canada. Her punishment would come principally, and with heavy hand, from the United States. Are we ready for it?

I know that few things could be more unpopular at this particular moment in Canada than a suggestion of reciprocity with the United States. I do not seek popularity, and I care little for it. Let me say what I think. Frequently preferen-