

"Exactly six weeks ago to-day," continued Mr. Lash, "the Hon. Mr. Fielding startled this country by introducing into Parliament a series of resolutions, on which to found an Act to carry out the terms of an agreement, which he and the Hon. Mr. Paterson had secretly negotiated at Washington, with the United States Government, providing for reciprocity of tariffs between Canada and the United States, admitting free of duty into each country from the other, practically all natural and farm products, and admitting at reduced rates of duty certain manufactured articles. I say that the country was startled. Let us enquire why. What has been Canada's position for many years past and what is now her position? It was and is one of unexampled prosperity, her trade steadily growing in all directions, her population rapidly increasing, and her people contented. The National Policy, which was commenced in 1879 by Sir John Macdonald's Government, was the beginning of the period of prosperity which we are still enjoying. This policy was continued and improved by the Liberal Government, which took office in 1896, and the great part, since then, taken by the present Government in the building up of Canada, was always along lines entirely inconsistent with the policy now sought to be forced upon us by this reciprocity agreement. Since the Laurier Government came into power the development of Canada has gone on apace, and trade between Canada and the Empire has been encouraged by the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars. Look at that map and see what has been done. The Canadian Pacific Railway has been completed. The Canadian Northern Railway System has been brought into existence. The Grand Trunk Pacific and the National Transcontinental have been partially constructed, and the country is irrevocably committed to their completion. Steamship lines have been established on the Great Lakes and on the St. Lawrence and on the ocean; our canals have been enlarged and improved, and other vast public and private expenditures have been made to promote and encourage east and west, and west and east, traffic, and traffic between Canada and Great Britain. Sir Wilfrid Laurier declared in his speech upon the Grand Trunk Pacific and National Transcontinental Railway Bills:—

" 'Why this new enterprise? Why this expenditure? Why should Parliament be called upon to assent to such a policy as is here indicated? We ask Parliament to assent to this policy because we believe—nay, we feel certain, and certain beyond a doubt—that in so doing we give voice and expression to a sentiment, a latent but deep sentiment, which is to-day in the mind, and still more in the heart, of every Canadian, that a railway to extend from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and to be, every inch of it, on