

pying a prominent place in the public affairs of this country, particularly from an adviser of the Crown. I further make the statement that such a remark should be resented by every fair-minded, respectable and intelligent man in this country. I do not think there was any justification for the remark made by the hon. gentleman on this occasion. True, his legs were under the mahogany with many followers of the Unionist party of England who assisted him and his party at the last election in this country, pecuniarily and otherwise. They had promised to give to Canada a market for her exportable surplus by means of a preferential tariff treatment in the shape of food taxes in Great Britain, a policy which they have abandoned, I imagine forever, within a few days past. It may have been quite popular for the hon. gentleman to play the demagogue on that occasion for, unfortunately for this country and for the Empire, we find today, too many men in England who take the position that this Empire was saved in September, 1911, by reason of the defeat of the reciprocity agreement, and such remarks seem to be readily accepted by many. We have been treated during the past year, or last few months, to many inane, puerile remarks from travelling English unionists who have come to this country to tell us that the Conservative party of Canada saved the Empire in 1911. We have had the muddling and vacuous views from visiting unionists such as Mr. Walter Long, delivered time and again here, as to the effect of trade with the United States upon our Imperial relations, and which were usually offensive to the people of this country. I think it is a matter of regret that many of these English Unionists who visit this country from time to time do not apparently do themselves the justice or credit of obtaining even a superficial knowledge of what that particular agreement meant. I protest against these observations from time to time made by representatives of the English Unionist party as to the effect of reciprocity with the United States upon the Empire. It is very difficult for a large section of the Canadian people to endure the contented ignorance of English opinion respecting some Canadian affairs and it is only proper and natural that on this side of the water it at times should be resented. I have not any objection to those who, usually the followers of the Unionist party, devote their best efforts to the perpetuation and welfare of the Empire, but it would better become them first to devote their time and their talents to the settlement of the many difficult political problems which confront them at home, and when they have ceased to be mediaeval and foolish respecting these, I am sure it will be time enough for them

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax).

to give their attention to Canadian affairs. Until that time arrives the people of this country are justified in resenting in the most vigorous fashion their interference in matters of Canadian politics when it becomes offensive, as it is when they say the proposed trade agreement of 1911 meant the dissolution of the Empire had it been ratified. I do wish to express my astonishment and surprise that there should come any succor or support to the element of public men in Great Britain from the hon. gentleman who is responsible for the measure now before the House. I want to repeat what I said a moment ago that had it not been for the British preferential tariff policy inaugurated by the Government which preceded the present Ministry, it would have been utterly impossible to have secured the consummation of the Canadian-West Indian agreement. In order to demonstrate the accuracy and correctness of my position, I want to review briefly I trust, but historically and chronologically the events leading up to the agreement now before us. If we get the proper starting point, I think we will get the proper direction and the proper destination in considering this matter. In 1890, the Minister of Trade and Commerce visited the West Indies on behalf of the Canadian Government with a view of securing some trade arrangements with these colonies, but without success. The events leading up to the appointment of the last Royal Commission very well set forth the history of the efforts made to secure a trade arrangement between Canada and the United States as it is, and I shall follow the wording of the report rather closely. The report relates that:

In 1890 Mr. Foster, then Minister of Finance in the Dominion, visited the West Indies with this object in view. The project met with little favour in the West Indian colonies; the governments were at the time negotiating with the United States for favourable treatment under the McKinley Tariff Act, and they considered it certain that the grant of reciprocal preference to Canada would be followed by the penalizing of West Indian sugar in the United States.

At that time sugar cane was the great product of all the West Indian Islands, or of the greater number of them. At that time it is to be remembered that owing to the prevalence of bounties paid in many European countries to the beet sugar industry, the sugar cane industry of the West Indies was paralyzed, and it did look then as if that particular industry would be crushed. The report of a Royal Commission appointed in 1897 was to the effect that at that time the sugar cane industry in the West Indies was almost at an end. In 1898 the Canadian preferential tariff was extended to the British West Indies. The report proceeds as follows: