

Can we not at least approach the matter with a sincere desire and a determination to come to some fair agreement, and thus bind our two countries closer together on the lines of commercial intercourse and exchange? If your government will make a proposition, I shall be very much pleased to take it up with my colleagues, and to pursue the negotiations with you to a finish, and I do not see why we should not come to conclusions which would be mutually advantageous. Once preferential inducements are added, our steamship communications can be bettered, and by this means our two kindred peoples will become more intimately acquainted with and interested in each other.

If, on the other hand, you wish Canada to make a proposition to you with the assurance that you desire to follow it to a completion, I shall be glad to place a proposal before you for consideration.

May I hope to hear from you in good time? Our Mr. Ross will give you any desired information as to our products, our exports and imports.

I desire to say that in my opinion the action of the Minister of Trade and Commerce in sending this communication to the Australian government is worthy of all commendation; but may I point out what I think is one objection, from the Canadian standpoint, to my hon. friend's letters? My hon. friend rather puts it that the improvement of the tariff relations is to precede the establishment of better steamship communication between the two countries. He suggests that if we can get a preferential tariff satisfactory to Canada then the steamship communication might be improved. In my judgment this country should move ahead irrespective of any improvement in tariff relations between Canada and other countries, and wherever there is an opportunity to develop trade, Canada should encourage the establishment of proper steamship communication in order to give facilities for trade. As I said before, high freight rates and inadequate steamship accommodation are just as much a barrier to improved trade between any two countries as the raising or maintaining of a tariff wall. The late government has shown an example which my hon. friend might well imitate. I find that for the encouragement of foreign trade between Canada and other countries, including Great Britain and the Dominions beyond the seas, Canada gave, last year, the very large sum of \$1,440,000. It seems to me that everyone must recognize that the improved steamship accommodation which has been secured by means of these very handsome subsidies has been a very great factor in developing the foreign trade of Canada to the enormous proportions which it has now attained, and of which every Canadian is so proud.

But, Sir, in considering whether or not my hon. friend has good ground for hoping that he will be able to accomplish anything

by his negotiations as Minister of Trade and Commerce, I am constrained to say that the past record of the right hon. the leader of the government (Mr. Borden), not only in his actions, but in his speeches, does not give very strong ground for the hope that my hon. friend will receive encouragement in the work which he has undertaken of endeavouring to improve the trade relations between Canada and these respective countries by diplomatic action. My hon. friend, I know, is at times enthusiastic in favour of enlarging the foreign trade of Canada. We know that as long ago as 1891, my hon. friend, in a most admirable speech which he made in this House, declared that he and the government of which he was a member were in favour of widening the bounds of commerce on every side and then, as if some one were asking the question, he said: "With the United States? Yes," but we find, Mr. Speaker, that when the opportunity came for my hon. friend to lend the force of his great power, and his surpassing eloquence towards widening the bounds of commerce with the great republic to the south, after some consideration, when about to plunge into the late political campaign, my hon. friend was one of the very strongest in denouncing the proposal which had been made by the late government to widen the bounds of commerce with the United States. Then I find that no longer ago than the 8th day of December last, my right hon. friend the leader of the government (Mr. Borden), who, when he speaks, must be taken as speaking for the party which he leads, was the guest of the Canadian Society of New York, and made a speech upon that occasion. He, I suppose, felt called upon to give to the people he was addressing some explanation of the action of the party of which he is the leader in turning down or seeking to have turned down the best—I say it advisedly—the best trade arrangement which was ever offered to the people of Canada. He felt called upon to explain the extraordinary course which the Conservative party had pursued with reference to that question. He was addressing a number of intelligent gentlemen who were familiar with the history of the negotiations which had taken place between Canada and the United States for many years past. He was addressing gentlemen who knew that all parties in Canada had been for years endeavouring to obtain better trade relations between these two great countries, and who would naturally be surprised at the action of the Conservative party, and would expect to hear some reason for the extraordinary position which the Conservative party, under the leadership of my right hon. friend, had taken. What was the language of my right hon. friend on that occasion? And remember,