

that period, and, as the hon. gentleman would do himself, if he were entering into a bargain, although he might have perfect confidence in the man with whom he was dealing, he would like to have in black and white a definite statement as to what the other party should do. If he binds himself, he naturally would think that the other party should be bound as well. Then again, the delegates had to return and report to the different West Indian colonies what they had done, and it would not be considered a businesslike proposition if there was not some definite guarantee given on one side as well as on the other. I do not think that showed any lack of faith in the continuance of the British preference, and if it is any gratification to my hon. friend to know anything about it, I may tell him that the Government has not at this present moment any intention of reducing the British preference.

Mr. OLIVER: I have had occasion already to say that it appears to me the treaty is seriously ineffective as being beneficial to the people of Canada, nor does it appear that it is seriously beneficial to the people of the West Indies, in the matter of reducing their taxation. The point has been raised that this treaty was entered into by the people of the West Indies rather under compulsion or expected compulsion than through good-will. Had my hon. friend made this treaty with the West Indies, rather from the standpoint of good-will than from the standpoint of compulsion, both Canada and the West Indies might have benefited to a much greater degree; that is to say, we might have had more substantial reductions in duty upon the different products that we buy from the West Indies, and they might have had more substantial reductions in duty upon the goods they buy from us. As to the benefit there is to Canada in a twenty per cent reduction in duty on Canadian goods going into the West Indies, I need not bring to the attention of those members of the House who are at all familiar with the matter, that at the present time other countries hold in those West Indian Islands an advantage of trade over Canada, that in all probability a twenty per cent preference to Canada will not overcome. As a matter of fact, in order to actually get into the trade of the West Indies, we need a very much more drastic treaty than we have, under the administration of my hon. friend, been able to get. In my humble opinion, the reason we have not been able to do better was because it was a question rather of fear on the part of the people of the West Indies, that, having in some way lost their market in the United States, they were in danger of losing their market in Canada. That was

why they were willing to enter into the agreement; and therefore they were doing so in a strictly defensive attitude, rather than with the idea of trying to do the best they could for themselves, and with Canada trying to do the best she could for herself. I have taken the liberty of criticising the treaty of my hon. friend from the point of view as I understood it. When I first saw the critics of the treaty point out that under it foodstuffs coming into Canada would come in actually under an increased rate of duty, and that there was a possibility under the treaty of increasing the rate of duty on the large majority of products going into the West Indies, I must say I thought it was a joke. But now I find that if it was a joke, it was a joke on the part of my hon. friend and his colleagues. The treaty is very disappointing to the people of Canada who are looking for a reduction in the cost of those articles that we get from the West Indies.

Mr. FOSTER: I must try to disabuse my hon. friend of the idea he has in his head that this matter was brought to the West Indies along a line of compulsion. Certainly no compulsion was exercised by Canada in any way, shape, or form. For fifteen years we have been giving in Canada thirty-three or thirty per cent preference to their goods coming into this country, and we had made no intimation that that would be taken away from them. It was a British preference which had been gradually extended to other British countries, until at the present time it embraces very much the larger part of the British world. I cannot tell all the motives which were present in the minds of West Indian people in making this agreement; but I am quite sure that good will and good feeling was the primary thought and the primary feeling in the minds of the delegates who came here representing their different dominions. They felt that they must do the very best they could in the way of preference in return for the preference which had been, as they say, generously given to them by Canada. There was no compulsion in the matter. I believe it sprang from real good will, good feeling and an idea that if we could keep a permanent connection between us in that way, it would be very much to the benefit of the West Indian Islands as well as to the benefit of Canada. The subject must be looked at in both ways. My hon. friend makes a great deal of the increased cost to articles of consumption by Canada because of this agreement. There are two sides to the agreement; there is not only a benefit that Canada may derive because under such an arrangement she gets articles of food or of use in at a lower rate of duty; but there is another benefit, in the opening it gives,