

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I said stimulated the demand for Canadian products in Great Britain.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I just turn at once and look at the returns of our trade with Great Britain and with the United States, as shown in the Trade and Navigation Returns. My hon. friend will not claim that there has been any preference extended to the United States, and yet I find that since 1897 the increase of our trade with the United States has been 80 per cent, while our increase of trade with Great Britain has been only 40 per cent notwithstanding the preferential tariff.

Hon. Mr. McMILLAN—How do you account for that?

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I account for it in the same way I account for the enormous expansion of trade which has taken place all over the civilized world during the last five years. It is not confined to Canada or the United States, but all civilized countries on the face of the earth have participated in this expansion, and it is hardly treating this House with proper respect for my hon. friend to rise in his place and, with seeming seriousness, tell us that all this demand for our products, this expansion of our trade, has been due to the preferential tariff. My hon. friend started out yesterday in the role of a historian, making some explanation with regard to things which happened in the province of Ontario politically in the earlier days of his political life, but some hon. gentlemen sitting near me, who took an active part in the affairs of Ontario at that time informed me that my hon. friend stopped short at the crucial point of the history he was giving the House, and did not deal with the most important part of it. However, I am not dealing with that, but I notice my hon. friend's memory appears to be equally bad when he talks about the history of the preferential tariff. My hon. friend surely has not forgotten that the Finance Minister, when he came to parliament in 1897, proposing that change which they now call the preferential tariff, was at great pains to explain that they did not mean to give any preference at all—that it was not a preference they were proposing, but a reciprocal tariff. That was the very wording of the measure,

and it was so understood all over the world. It was in that sense Kipling understood it, when he spoke of the Lady of the Snows favouring those who favoured her. There was no such thought as giving Britain a sole preference. My hon. friend seems to have forgotten that they proposed a reciprocal tariff which would have given some countries, which have been pursuing commercial enmity towards us, advantages which would have been denied to some British colonies, though not to Britain herself. My hon. friend seems to have ignored all that. He seems to have forgotten that it was not until after Sir Charles Tupper and the leaders of the Conservative party in the House of Commons did what they could to put them on the right track—although they amended their tariff later, on Sir Charles Tupper's suggestion in order to give them a hole of escape, not until after they went to England and Mr. Chamberlain told them that even after the abrogation of the German and Belgian treaties they could not give the general or reciprocal preference they proposed, but would have to limit it to British dominions, that it was made a preference for the empire. If all those advantages have accrued from the sole preference as claimed by my hon. friend, the government are not entitled to credit for it, because they gave it by accident. The government aimed at another thing altogether, which was a reciprocal tariff. They were forced by the British government, and by the power of the treaties existing and the policy of the empire, to make it a British preference. So even if all the advantages which my hon. friend speaks of had arisen from it—which I think few people of this country will be willing to believe—my hon. friend is not entitled to a very great amount of credit, because after all it was nothing more than a lucky blunder on their part.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—We got there at all events.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I did not intend to have made any remarks upon the address, but I was prompted to rise mainly with a view to deal with this extraordinary argument, if I may so call it, which was presented in the House by my hon. friend the Secretary of State. The hon. gentleman said that it was British public opinion that came to the rescue of Sir Wilfrid Laurier