

of British goods in her markets. In 1894 the historic conference took place in Ottawa, at which were represented Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and England, and after full discussion a resolution was adopted affirming the principle of the resolution passed by the Parliament of Canada, and asking that Her Majesty's Government would favourably consider the question. Unfortunately, it fell to the duty of the Marquis of Ripon to reply to that appeal, and I need not tell any person who is acquainted with English politics that the Marquis of Ripon was Colonial Secretary in a Government which rested upon a very narrow majority in the House of Commons, and which, however otherwise well disposed, was not in a position to deal with such a question as that. When the members of the United Empire Trade League went back to Lord Salisbury in 1896, and pressed him to give effect to the declarations that had been so thoroughly sustained throughout the country at the general election, he told them he wanted a scheme. In that year I came to Canada—as I dare say some hon. gentlemen will recollect—and I was invited to deliver an address before the Montreal Board of Trade. In that address I endeavoured to show the practicability and the feasibility of the adoption of that policy, and I urged it in the strongest possible manner. The Toronto "Globe," the organ of the great Liberal party in this country, criticised my action, and said: Why should Sir Charles Tupper waste his time and his breath in advocating preferential trade in Montreal, when it is a policy which every man in this country will hold up both his hands in support of; and the "Globe" further said: The battle has to be fought in England. Well, the "Globe" was right in that. I have no hesitation in saying that when on this great Jubilee occasion, Canada had an opportunity of being represented by the leader of this Government, that battle would have been won if it had been fought in England by him. Sir, I shall give you my reasons for entertaining that opinion. My answer to the "Globe" was: It is quite true that the battle must be fought in England, and that is why I am here urging upon the boards of trade at this meeting in Montreal, and all over Canada, to send delegates to represent them at the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire, and press there this question of preferential trade. The Toronto Board of Trade passed a resolution affirming the policy in the strongest and most emphatic terms, and suggesting precisely how, in their opinion, it should be carried out. That resolution read as follows:—

Resolved, that, in the opinion of this conference, the advantage to be obtained by a closer union between the various portions of the British Empire are so great as to justify an arrangement as nearly as possible of the nature of a Zollverein, based upon principles of the freest exchange

Sir CHARLES TUPPER.

of commodities within the Empire, consistent with the tariff requirements incident to the maintenance of the local government of each kingdom, dominion, province or colony, now forming part of the British family of nations.

That was very specific and very clear. An hon. gentleman who is now a member of this House, although he was not then, Mr. Osler, was sent to represent the Board of Trade, and to press this resolution. I have only read the last clause of it, because that is the most important; and when he had put that resolution before the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, who opened the conference, made a most important and striking speech, in which he substantially endorsed the resolution passed by the Board of Trade, and maintained that the policy was perfectly practicable of accomplishment on those terms. He said:

If they (the colonies) desire, as we desire, and as we believe they do, this closer union—if they are willing to make some sacrifice of their present arrangements and convictions in order to secure it—let them say so. Let the offer come voluntarily from them, and I believe it will be considered in this country, not in any huckstering spirit, but that it will be entertained as part of the great policy which is intended to unite in the closest bonds of affection and of interest all the communities which are under the British flag and all the subjects of Her Majesty throughout the world.

The next authority we have on that important question is no less distinguished a person than the right hon. the First Minister. He was then appealing to the people of this country to give him power, and was stating to the people what he would do if they clothed him with power; and I think that every member of this House will admit that no more solemn obligation can rest on the shoulders of any public man than the obligation to redeem honourably, honestly and faithfully the pledges he gives to the electorate when he is seeking power at their hands. This is what he said at London, on the 17th of May, 1896:

In regard to this question of preferential trade, Mr. Laurier desired to say that Sir Charles Tupper was no more favourable to the idea than himself.

He went on to say:

My hope is—nay, my conviction is—that on the 23rd of June the Liberal party will be at the head of the polls; and then it will be the Liberal party, with its policy of a revenue tariff, that will send commissioners to London to arrange for a basis of preferential trade.

These were the terms in which the hon. gentleman pledged himself to carry out the policy of preferential trade if he obtained power. Under these circumstances, had we not a right to expect that some effort at all events, on his part would be made to show that he had not attempted to delude the people of this country with false promises, only to trample them under his feet