

take part in the controversy which has been long going on in England on the question of mutual preferential trade. We would not take any part in the contest between the tariff reformers and the free traders. We thought it would not be dignified, we thought it would not be any part of our business, we thought it would be an act of interference for us to take part in this controversy, whether on the one side of the question or the other, and we preferred to remain silent upon that point, having laid our policy before the English people. And what was our policy? Our policy is set forth by the Canadian ministers in Great Britain at the conference of 1902, and it was in these words:

The Canadian ministers stated that if they could be assured that the Imperial Government would accept the principle of preferential trade generally, and particularly grant to the food products of Canada in the United Kingdom exemption from duties now levied or hereafter imposed, then the Canadian ministers would be prepared to go further into the subject and endeavor to give to the British manufacturer some increased advantage over his foreign competitors in the markets of Canada.

This was our policy laid down at the Imperial Conference of 1902. This is our policy in this year 1911 at the conference which is going to take place. We have been told by the other side of the House that the action we have taken with regard to this agreement has made it impossible to implement the policy thus laid down. How can that be argued seriously? The Canadian ministers at the conference in 1902 stated that they were prepared to give to Great Britain a preference on manufactured goods in our market if Great Britain would give us preference on our natural products in her market. Great Britain does not export many natural products; on the contrary she is a large importer of natural products. We are exporters not of manufactured products, but of natural products, and we are large importers of manufactured products, and we have given to the Americans a free entrance to our markets only for their natural products as they have given us a free entrance to their market for our natural products and how can that affect the British Islands? Surely in no way at all can it affect our trade with Britain. The United States can enter our market with their natural products, but it is certain that England will never send a bushel of any kind of grain to Canada. However, England can give us a preference in her market for our natural products if she chooses to change her policy, and then we are prepared to give her upon her manufactured products a corresponding advantage. Sir, the policy of Canada is just the same as it was three months ago when this arrangement was made; nay, it is the same to-day as it has been for the last 12 years, and it will be the policy of the Canadian government at the next Imperial Confer-

ence which will open in May next. What then of all the shrieks and lamentations and imprecations we have heard from all sides upon this point? Surely the question has not been properly thought out for if it were it would have answered itself. Perhaps it is just as well now, since I am reviewing all the objections to this agreement, that I should take up another point which has been raised against it and which has drawn many a tear from the eyes of some gentlemen sitting on the other side. I refer to the consequences of the agreement on what are known as the Most Favoured Nations. There are in existence certain old treaties between England and other countries in which it is provided that if England or any of her colonies should give a preference to any country in the world the same treatment shall be given to those nations with which England has these old treaties. These treaties were in the past of so little consequence that we never troubled about them. When in 1902 we found in our way the treaty with Germany and the treaty with Belgium we had for the redemption of those treaties similar treaties with other countries were in our way, and, therefore, we did not trouble about them. However, all of a sudden those treaties have assumed enormous magnitude in the eyes of some, and a few days ago we heard a gentleman on the other side of the House say that we were practically opening our doors to the whole world. Well, the whole world is a big phrase, but let us examine in detail what it is composed of in this sense. The whole world in detail so far as these treaties are concerned comprises Venezuela, Switzerland, Spain, Spain, Russia, Japan, Denmark, Columbia, Bolivia (and who ever heard of any trade with Bolivia), Austria-Hungary, and the Argentine Republic. Let us see what our trade is with those nations. All told last year we exported to Venezuela \$14,000 worth and we actually imported from Venezuela \$53,000 worth, a trade which would probably suitably the next year. And, in the \$53,000 worth of trade of Venezuela there is not included any of the natural products we mention in our agreement with the United States. Then from Switzerland we imported \$2,603,000 worth and we exported to Switzerland \$10,000 worth, and our imports from Switzerland were chiefly silks and cottons and manufactures of silks and cottons. Sweden, our exports last year were \$111,000, and our imports \$267,000, and there was not a dollar's worth of anything included in the agreement. We exported to Spain last year \$51,000 worth, and imported from Spain \$1,040,000 worth, and our imports included fruits, but they were oranges and tropical fruits of that character such as are not provided for in the agreement at all. With Russia, our exports were \$50,000 last year and our imports \$138,000 and I cannot find among