

copœia, in anticipation of some compound, or some composite trade theory being found to meet the divergences and the irreconcilable views of the Liberal party.

I should like to ask my hon. friend opposite are we to pare down the present tariff until we reach a revenue tariff basis, as was our experience previous to 1878, or are we to prepare the way by further paring it down so that the Prime Minister may be able to redeem the promises he made to the people of Canada previous to the elections of 1896, namely to introduce into Canada free trade as it then was and as it is in England, or are we to further experiment with it so that the Prime Minister may be able to redeem the promises which he made to the farmers of the Northwest upon his recent pilgrimage to that country, when he apologized for the existence of the present tariff as simply an expedient to answer the purposes of the time being and with which he was not at all in sympathy, but which he hoped in course of time would give way to the free trade system as they have it in England, and as advocated by the Manchester school of which he was a disciple. The Prime Minister informed the people of the west that he was thoroughly in sympathy with that particular school, with Cobden, Bright and Gladstone, and that he hoped the time would shortly arrive when there would be a supersession of our present fiscal system, by that which to-day obtains in Great Britain. May I ask hon. gentlemen what about the preferential tariff in view of those other experiments? Is this system, which has been extolled by the government from the time of its introduction down to the present moment, to be shipwrecked by the many side winds and the shoals towards which the government seems to be drifting, with a view of wrecking it. This is the idol of the Liberal party upon which they stumbled in 1898, when it was the intention of the government to extend the preference to all countries having a lower tariff than our own, but by reason of constitutional difficulties found it necessary to extend to England exclusively the preferential tariff which to-day she enjoys. Why did not the representatives of this government at that

time insist upon that preferential tariff being a mutual one? I venture to say that if the government of Canada in 1898 had taken strong ground upon this question mutual preference would have to-day existed between the Dominion of Canada and Great Britain; but there was a sinister design I venture to say in the government adopting the policy which it did, in saying that Canada did not want anything in return, that it was opposed to mutual preference. If mutual preference had been established at that time, if reciprocal trade relations had been established between Great Britain and Canada, the government would not have had the free hand that it has since enjoyed to tinker with the tariff and to try all the fiscal expedients in which they have been indulging. Honourable gentlemen who are listening to me know that no capitalists, no manufacturer, can count with certainty as to what the trade policy of Canada will be 24 hours ahead of the time when he may be called upon to make his investment or commit himself to the obligations always incident to establishing industrial undertakings. I am not taking this position out of solicitude in the slightest degree for the manufacturer, because to a very large extent I am not in sympathy with that great majority of the manufacturers to-day who adopt an interested political attitude for the purpose of promoting ends which they have in view. The manufacturer of to-day makes his pilgrimage to Ottawa. He represents to the government what he in particular wants. He contributes to their election funds, he exercises his influence in their behalf though he knows that the government are not in sympathy with him. He hears the Prime Minister and his other ministers make free trade speeches in rural constituencies and high protective speeches in industrial centres. He reads long preachments upon free trade in the Liberal press, and he knows of certain political editors who go to Washington for the purpose of coquetting with the Washington government to bring about the very changes in our commercial relations which are involved in this discussion. With an unctuous self abnegation he is always prepared to assure the government that he