

I think that, as far as Canada is concerned, the day is considerably distant when we will propose, if it is not to our advantage somewhat, to give very great commercial advantages to the British Empire without receiving something in return.

After all, the imperialism of my hon. friend is of a somewhat windy variety; it is rather of the huckstering and bargaining variety; but I am dealing with him as a prophet for a moment. In three years, after he said the day was distant, there was a change of government—and the thing was done; and done with vast profit to the country and vast advantage to the imperial connection. I think it is rather shabby of him, with a record like that, when he had banned the birth of this child, when he had declared that the Fielding preference must not be born—‘the day is far distant,’ when we will do such a thing—to come to the House now and say, as he did to the Minister of Finance the other day: It is not your child. Why, he actually wants to confuse our minds, surely, as to the difference between the Fielding preference and the Chamberlain preference. Not having been able to get this wax doll of his to live, he wants to claim the Fielding child. The hon. gentleman has appeared in a great many roles in his time, but this is the first occasion, so far as I know, on which he has assumed the role of the political kidnapper.

The Chamberlain preference has died, and I think largely because of the unfulfilled prophecies which have been uttered in regard to it. But it died because, in its intrinsic nature, there was nothing in it. It is important to Canada to know what there is in this thing, and why we should expect something to live which has not in it the germ of life. The moment you examine the possibility of the old country giving preferences in a fair way as between the different portions of the empire, you would see the thing is impossible. In Australia more wool is produced than is necessary to supply the wants of the whole empire, and it is an element of political economy that you cannot give protection to an article if more is produced in it than the country requires. So the idea of giving a preference on wool in Australia is an economic impossibility. But my hon. friends say: We will get it on wheat. Well, how would that bind Australia to the British Crown? If I were an Australian, and my hon. friends opposite were Canadians, and Great Britain gave a preference in wheat and not give it on wool, would not I say that the old country was showing favouritism to Canada, while doing nothing for Australia? Would that help build up the British Empire?

What would be the effect of giving a preference on wheat? Clearly the moment

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer).

you gave that preference you would concentrate the supplies of wheat in the outlying portions of the empire upon the British market, because you would raise the price of wheat in Britain. If it did not do that, it would be no good to Canada. You would raise the price in Britain, and you would raise the price of bread to the British workingman. Well, if I were a British workingman, how much do you think that would increase my love for Canadian preference? Flag waving won't fill a man's stomach. But that would only be the first effect of it. If a better price was given for wheat in Britain and the price was raised to the British workingman, it is clear that a secondary result would be a concentration of supplies there, because they always go where the highest price prevails. You would also raise the price of food to the workingman in Canada. It is an everyday truism that the price of wheat is made in Liverpool. Raise the price there and you inevitably raise it to the Canadian consumer. South Africa imports wheat. You would raise the price of wheat to the workingman in South Africa, who buys it in the world's market. And do hon. gentlemen think they would build a permanent empire by a system of preference which would raise the price of the commonest article of food in Britain, Canada and South Africa? Now, these are some of the considerations which were discussed again and again in the old country, and it was largely considerations of this kind that led Mr. Asquith, at the beginning of these discussions, to declare to a crowded audience: The thing is an economic impossibility. The idea has died, because there was no life in it, and it has been killed, so to speak, in successive general elections. A friend of mine was in conversation the other day with a nobleman having intimate associations with British politics, and he said to my friend: If Canada had offered free trade within the empire it would have been fruitless, because it would be impossible to shift the free trade sentiment of Britain in fifty years. This empire has grown up on the basis of absolute freedom of its component parts. Would you have us repeat the experiment that Great Britain tried with her American colonies, and which lost them to the empire? Was it not this very mistake of mixing up trade relations with politics? Was it not that which led George Washington to advise his countrymen so earnestly not to become entangled with the politics of foreign nations? Now, the rule in Britain is to make her own tariffs, and what is good for Britain is good enough for Canada. It is the only rule which works to the permanency of the empire.

The hon. member for North Toronto had a good deal to say about conservation. The