

The Liberal Party and the British Preference

In their frantic efforts to cover up their unenviable record the Liberals are putting forward the plea that they are the champions of the British preference. The spectacle of Sir Wilfrid Laurier with his record of antipathy to everything that is British parading across the public stage in the garb of a defender of this principle, would be amusing were it not so palpably dishonest.

THE FIRST ADVOCATES OF A PREFERENCE.

Let us see what are the records of the two parties in respect to the British preference.

In the first place it is necessary to point out that the trumped up claim that the Liberals are the progenitors of closer trade with Britain is nothing more than a bit of Laurier mythology. The father of the British preference idea is Sir Charles Tupper. The grand old man of the Conservative party pointed out the advantages of closer commercial relations between Canada and Britain as far back as 1878.

Ten years later a Mr. Marshall, supporting Sir John Macdonald, moved a resolution affirming that it would be to the advantage of Canada to have a trade alliance with the Mother Country; and the late Mr. D'Alton McCarthy put forward, from time to time, views of a similar character.

PREFERENCE BLOCKED BY FREE TRADE.

Where were Laurier and the Liberal leaders then on the great question of British trade? We will let Sir Wilfrid answer. Speaking before the Young Men's Liberal Club of Toronto, September, 1889, he gave his views as follows:

“I may say at once that I would be in favour of a more close alliance with Great Britain. BUT IF THERE IS ANY MAN WHO BELIEVES THAT SUCH AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CANADA AND GREAT BRITAIN CAN BE FRAMED UPON ANY OTHER BASIS THAN THAT OF FREE TRADE, THAT MAN IS A RIP VAN WINKLE WHO HAS BEEN SLEEPING, NOT ONLY FOR THE LAST SEVEN YEARS, BUT FOR THE LAST FORTY-FOUR YEARS.”