

It was hailed with joy by the friends of British Imperial unity in every land. It was commended by Her Majesty in her Speech from the Throne in the Parliament at Westminster. It was the subject of thousands of articles of the most commendatory character, in the British and colonial press. Rudyard Kipling, the poet of the Empire, was quick to feel the wave of sentiment that passed over Great Britain, and within a few hours from the announcement of the tariff, he embalmed the subject in spirited lines which will live in the history of Canada, and which, even if, as some have thought, they may convey inaccurate impressions as to the coldness of our climate, will nevertheless tell to every reader that in 1897 the heart of "Our Lady of the Snows" was full of warmth and devotion to the interests of the Empire. British statesmen, both publicly and privately, expressed their satisfaction with Canada's action. The Colonial Secretary, the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain, in an official despatch to His Excellency the Governor General, which I shall place on the Table—a despatch communicating the decision of Her Majesty's Ministers respecting the effect of the Belgian and German treat-

ties—used some words which I may properly quote here :

"I desire," said Mr. Chamberlain, "to add, in conclusion, that the action of the Dominion Government and Parliament in this matter, although, unfortunately, its full effect will be temporarily postponed, has been warmly welcomed and appreciated by Her Majesty's Government and the people of this country, as a measure which cannot fail to result in material benefit to the mother country and to Canada, and to weld together still more firmly the ties which now unite them."

Sir, the policy which Her Majesty's Government so warmly commended, was a policy designed to establish preferential trade between Canada and the mother country. To-day we submit a proposal which enlarges the sphere of that preferential trade. To-day we propose to include within its benefits a large group of British colonies, the affairs of which are at this moment a cause of much anxiety to Her Majesty's Government. Thus step by step the good work goes on. One step remains to be taken, and I believe the day is not far distant when we shall be able to take it—a step which will extend the benefits of the preference, not only to Great Britain and the colonies which we have now included, but to every colony and possession of the Empire.