

their action had never excited a word of commendation or an expression of satisfaction for the benefit conferred.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I regret very much to detain the House at such length, but the subjects brought before the notice of the House by the Speech seem to make it necessary to do so, and after all perhaps it is the most convenient mode to deal with these questions in order to save the time of the House. When you, Mr. Speaker, left the Chair I had come to the proposal of the Government last session in regard to preferential trade, and it will be in the recollection of the House that a very sharp issue was made between the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches and those on this side of the House. We have now reached the point when we are in a position to deal more effectively with those questions than we were then. When the Government proposed, with a great flourish of trumpets, to show their loyalty by establishing a preference in favour of goods imported from the United Kingdom, we joined issue with them, and told them it was impracticable under the measure they proposed to accomplish anything of the kind. The House will recollect that we were met on that occasion by the united phalanx of the Treasury benches, who held that those treaties did not apply. The resolution offered to the House read as follows:—

That when the customs tariff of any country admits the products of Canada on terms which, on the whole, are as favourable to Canada as the terms of the Reciprocal Tariff herein referred to, are to the countries to which it may apply, articles which are the growth, produce, or manufacture of such country, when imported direct therefrom, may then be entered for duty, or taken out of warehouse for consumption in Canada, at the reduced rates of duty provided in the Reciprocal Tariff set forth in Schedule "D."

The first point we took in respect to that measure was, that the Government could not pass it, that they could not obtain the assent of the Governor General to it, that he would at once tell them that under his instructions it was impossible for him to pass a measure of that kind. That objection was treated with great contempt by hon. gentlemen opposite. But in the course of a month they grew wiser, and they returned and very quietly proposed the clause which we said would be necessary in order to enable the Governor General to give his sanction to the Bill or to any Act whatever. This clause provided for the introduction of all the countries which under treaty with Great Britain might be found to be entitled to the reduction. Hon. gentlemen opposite,

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notwithstanding the fact that they submitted that clause to the House and amended their Bill, declared without any hesitation or qualification that this was done as an act of caution, that there was no doubt as to the Government's position, and no hon. gentleman was so loud and pronounced as the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and in referring to that hon. gentleman I desire to say that I learned with pleasure of the honours conferred on him by the Crown and I hope he will long live to enjoy them. That hon. gentleman scouted the idea presented from this side of the House, and he delivered a long argument, which was heralded in some rather important journals in England as an important deliverance on this constitutional question. It was stated as an explanation of the fact that no reply was made to the refutation of that hon. gentleman's argument, that although a young man of some prominence, the hon. member for Halifax had made a reply, it was not necessary to answer it as the Government were anxious to close the debate. I believe the fact is that the argument presented by the hon. member for Halifax was so overwhelming that the Government sought in vain among the legal talent of the opposite side of the House for any one to undertake a reply. I think I am correctly informed when I say that the answer the Government received from their supporters in the legal profession was that the answer of my hon. friend was overwhelming and unanswerable, and that is the true reason why the debate was allowed to close without a reply being attempted. What has been the result? The result has proved, notwithstanding the loud-mouthed affirmations of the Minister of Marine, that there was no foundation for his argument, that it was a mass of sophistry and perverted the historical position of the question, and in fact there was nothing in it. It will be remembered that when the First Minister asked what his view of the question was, he rose and gave it with great confidence. He said the Government had examined all the treaties of the world, every treaty of every country, and had found that England was the only country that would be entitled to preference under that clause, and therefore it would give a complete preference to England. That was the position taken. Hon. members on this side of the House asked what about Belgium. The reply they received was that Belgium was excluded, and the Government were quite certain there was not another country in the world except England that would come within the preferential clause. After two or three days' discussion the Government ascertained that New South Wales would be entitled to it, as its tariff was absolutely lower than that of England; that she could not be excluded, but she was the only exception. We suggested that Holland, Japan and other countries could claim the benefit of the