

led to the action of the Imperial government in denouncing the treaties with Belgium and Germany which has been a matter of controversy for a great number of years and which has been solicited by successive governments. The question has been up very often on the floor of this chamber and hon. gentlemen are thoroughly acquainted with it. The denunciation of the treaties was requested for the purpose of enabling the colonies of Great Britain to admit British goods into Canada or Australia on better terms than the rest of the world were permitted to send them. That was the object of getting the treaties denounced. Recollect that it did not require the denouncing of the treaties to allow England to put on a preferential tariff in England; that was open to England to do at any time whether the treaties were in force or not, but it required the denouncing of the treaties in order to permit Canada to reduce her tariff or to have free trade with Great Britain, while still maintaining the duties against the rest of the world. That was the object of the denunciation of the treaties, that was why we applied that the treaties might be denounced. It was applied for by the conservative government. As you all recollect, Sir John Abbott prepared an address and sent it forward when he was premier, and it has been a matter of correspondence with the British government for many years. There was a meeting of the colonial premiers last year at the Jubilee ceremonies and they met together with Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, to discuss this very point, in order to place before the Imperial government the necessity that arose on the part of Canada, Australia and other outlying portions of the British Empire, for the British government to denounce those treaties which they evidently regarded as a very great safeguard to their commercial affairs. These favoured nation treaties have been negotiated by England as far back as the year 1820 or 1830. They have been arranged with nearly every nation of the earth, and Great Britain attaches very great importance to these commercial treaties. Their importance has been brought out more forcibly than ever before by recent affairs in China. Great Britain has with China a treaty containing the most favoured nation treaty by which she is admitted, and Canada with all the British Empire is admitted, to trade freely in Chinese ports upon the same

terms as may be accorded to any foreign nation, and it is upon that right that England is to-day standing in order to maintain any ports that are acquired by any foreign power open to British and Canadian trade, a policy that is now being acquiesced in by Germany and Russia. That only shows the importance that Great Britain attaches to these commercial treaties. Now, the premiers met there, and this position was put before the Colonial Secretary, and it was the climax of the negotiations that had been continually going on, mostly, I believe, from Canada herself. Great Britain agreed to the desire of the Canadian government, and denounced those treaties. What for? So that Canada might reduce her tariff and establish, as I thought, as I supposed, and I have advocated for a number of years, free trade with Great Britain, while still keeping up her tariff against the people of the United States as long as their hostility to our commercial interests remains. Canada went over there with a guerdon held out to the people of Great Britain—with a reduction of 25 per cent upon her tariff. This was a kind of tempting bait to say, "Now you denounce those treaties, you put that in force and then you will see what we will do in order to bring about that commercial unity which you think is so important to the prosperity of Canada." And Great Britain did it. I say, hon. gentlemen, that the Canadian people are bound in honour to carry out the idea that was conveyed by the premier of Canada, when at that Jubilee celebration upon every platform, he announced that that was the policy he advocated, and that was the policy he expected to carry out, and it was to enable him to carry out that policy that he asked the government of Great Britain to denounce those treaties which were of such value to the people of Great Britain. And I say, hon. gentlemen, that we cannot have any better evidence of that than a short extract I took from a speech made by Lord Rosebery a month or two ago in which he discussed the question of free trade, and apparently taking the stand of the Liberal party in Britain firmly upon that policy in order that Canada and other countries and the people of Great Britain might know exactly the stand they took. He says:

But I have an illustrious authority, perhaps the most illustrious outside these islands, inside the