

My fourth proposition is that a true Zollverein for the Empire, that a free trade established throughout the Empire, although it would involve the imposition of duties against foreign countries, and would be in that respect a derogation from the high principles of free trade and from the practice of the United Kingdom up to the present time, would still be a proper subject for discussion, and might probably lead to a satisfactory arrangement, if the colonies on their part were willing to consider it.

Now, who in the Opposition is willing to come to the question on this basis, that there should be no customs duties within the empire? Let him rise in his place. Let hon. gentlemen opposite tell the people of Canada that they are prepared to advocate a system of preferential trade on the basis that there shall be within the empire no customs duties whatever. Let them say they are willing to give up our customs duties against Great Britain, I do not say against Germany, France or the United States. Among hon. gentlemen opposite none will prove to be so loyal an apostle of preferential trade as to say that he and his associates are willing to give up protection against Britain. Do we not know that the National Policy, of which even at this late date we heard a eulogy on the floor of this House to-day, was intended to stab the trade of Great Britain? Let me proceed further with my quotations from the speech of Mr. Chamberlain. This is how he concluded this part of the argument:

But the principle which I claim must be accepted, if we are to make any, even the slightest progress, is that within the different parts of the Empire protection must disappear, and that the duties must be revenue duties, and not protective duties in the sense of protection, for the products of one part of the Empire against those of another part.

This is very plain. Mr. Chamberlain says in so many words that within the empire there can be no protective duties by one part of the empire against another part. Are hon. gentlemen opposite ready to assent to this proposition? They will not have the chance of making declarations contradictory to the position they occupy. The answer was made by the hon. leader of the Opposition last session when discussing the effect of the reduction of 25 per cent which we were offering to Great Britain. This is how he characterized it:—

The industries of Canada built up at such enormous cost, industries which have made Canada what it is to-day, industries that represent an enormous amount of capital invested, industries that have enriched Canada by the progress and prosperity she has enjoyed while they have been in operation. These industries will become paralyzed again when exposed to a reduction of 25 per cent on this general tariff, and one after another they will succumb.

I must say the hon. gentleman has again proved a false prophet. Although a reduction has been made, not of 25 but of 12½ per cent, never at any time in the history of

Canada have her mills been so fully employed. Let me go one step further. Let me take the proposition of Mr. Chamberlain as he made it. No one will deny, every one will admit that there is grandeur in his proposal. I do not discuss it from the economic point of view, but simply from the political point of view, and I do not hesitate to say there is grandeur in the idea of a galaxy of nations acknowledging the same allegiance and all bound together by the ties of free trade. But is that the idea hon. gentlemen opposite have in their minds? No; they could not rise to the high conception presented by Mr. Chamberlain, but they would drag him down to the low level of their own paltry conception. The truth is that the question of preferential trade at the present time has to be discussed from the point of no customs tariff existing within any part of the empire, and I do not say that Canada is now ready for it. Canada is not ready to give up its customs tariff, and so long as Canada is not ready to give up its customs tariff, it is no use to preach the doctrine of preferential trade, whether here or in England or anywhere at all.

I have not much to say in regard to what the hon. gentleman has stated with respect to the Klondike Railway. I rather commend the course he has taken on this occasion on this subject. There is a good deal, however, to say with respect to the mining regulations, which also can be deferred to a future occasion. I am not prepared to say that I agree with everything said by the hon. gentleman in this respect, though I am strongly of the opinion that we should endeavour by all means to keep that far distant part of our country for our own people. Great developments have taken place since last session. Canada has at all times been able to boast that it is endowed by Providence with many rich gifts. Her fertile plains and valleys are certainly not surpassed in any other country; her forests are not equalled by the forests of any other land; her fisheries are rich; but suddenly gold discoveries have been made in our own territory which, if they prove as extensive as they are supposed to be, will no doubt make Canada one of the most famous gold producing countries. But this discovery has been made under very exceptional circumstances. It had been supposed up to the present time, that gold was, as it were, a product of the sun, to be found only in these regions adjacent to the equator. The discovery in Canada has been made well within the land of the midnight sun, the land of almost perpetual winter. The same has taken place in this case which has taken place at all times in history after a discovery of gold, from the time that Jason and the Argonauts went in search of the Golden Fleece down to our own generation, when the discoveries of gold were made in California and Australia—thousands of men rush at once in search