

tralian colonies. In the town of Owen Sound we have a company, the North American Bent Chair Company, Limited, which manufactures nothing but chairs. My information is that last year that company shipped to Australia and New Zealand \$171,000 worth of chairs, and they tell me that if we could obtain a preference in the Australian markets and an increase of the preference that obtains in New Zealand, they could double that exportation, bringing it close to \$400,000 a year. This is one illustration of what Canada might accomplish if we had a preference in the Australian markets.

Mr. PUGSLEY. Can the hon. gentleman tell me through what ports their shipments to Australia are chiefly made?

Mr. MIDDLEBRO. I cannot say, but I think it is likely through Atlantic ports.

Mr. PUGSLEY. Through Canadian ports or through New York?

Mr. MIDDLEBRO. Most likely through Canadian ports. I am glad to know that the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce has already taken steps to have a conference on the subject. I agree very largely with the remarks of the hon. ex-Minister of Public Works, with the exception of his attempt to show that the action taken by the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce with a view to obtaining a preference for Canada in the Australian market is at variance with his opposition to the late government's reciprocity measure. I think I can show that it was strictly in accordance with his previous attitude in that regard, because had we adopted the reciprocity pact, we would not to-day be discussing the possibility of better trade relations with Australia; we would have been deprived of the only weapon we have for obtaining preferential trade with Australia, namely, the ability to give them something in return for what they may give us. If that reciprocity arrangement had passed, Australia would have been able to send to this country free of duty every article which, under that arrangement, the United States could have sent in free. I say that the present policy of the Minister of Trade and Commerce is strictly in line with the position he took on the reciprocity measure. That policy has in view reciprocity within the empire, which is a very different thing from reciprocity with a foreign nation.

Mr. PUGSLEY. What I was quoting from was a declaration of the Prime Minister made at a banquet in New York to the effect that the Conservative party are unalterably opposed to the framing of tariffs by diplomatic action, and he gave as a reason for that conclusion the dissatisfaction which had occurred among the British possessions in South Africa; and what I

Mr. MIDDLEBRO.

said was that I was not able to reconcile the present demand of my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce for reciprocal tariffs between Canada and Australia and between Canada and the West Indies, framed by diplomatic action, with the declared policy of the Conservative party as thus stated by the Prime Minister.

Mr. MIDDLEBRO. It may be that the Prime Minister is not correctly quoted, but even if he is, my hon. friend will not deny that in the course of his speech he said that he was surprised that the Minister of Trade and Commerce should now be attempting to extend the trade relations of this country when he rejected the opportunity of having reciprocity with the United States, and he maintained that his present action was inconsistent with the position he took with reference to the reciprocity pact. I say that it is entirely consistent, because now he is able to negotiate a trade arrangement with Australia which he would not have been able to do had the reciprocity pact passed.

Mr. F. B. McCURDY. (Shelburne-Queens). Mr. Speaker, I regret to observe a disposition on the part of some members of this House to belittle the possibilities of trade between Canada and the West Indian Islands. It is common knowledge that for many years a large and profitable trade has been done by Halifax merchants with those islands—that the foundations of many substantial Halifax fortunes were made in that trade. That was particularly in the days of wooden ships. Although under modern conditions the steamship service is not, in my opinion, adequate, yet it is a fact that a business of considerable and increasing magnitude and financially satisfactory, exists to-day at Halifax, and it can be largely extended. The West India steamship service is a more difficult one than some of us are aware, because it is not a question of ocean-going boats running from a port in Canada to a port in the West Indies, but it necessarily includes a sort of coasting service. A boat suitable for carrying mails from Halifax to Kingston, Jamaica, for instance, is not qualified to call at the small ports of the Windward Islands. There must be either a central depot in the West Indies to which large ships would go, with coasting vessels of lighter draught to go from there to the smaller ports, or else vessels of lighter draught to do the combined services, which would mean a slow service for mails and unsatisfactory accommodation for passengers. Export trade with the West Indian Islands, consisting of flour, fish and general produce, has been largely controlled in the past by New York and West Indian houses with large financial resources.