

asking the imperial government to adopt that very policy. That does not seem to exhibit a very great degree of foresight on the part of my hon. friend the Minister of Finance. The speeches which were made by the colonial representatives at the Colonial Conference have not been published. It has been said by a member of the imperial government that they were suppressed at the suggestion of the colonial representatives. Might I ask my right hon. friend whether or not the Canadian representatives made any suggestion looking to the suppression of their speeches? It would have been very interesting indeed to know what was the attitude of the Canadian representatives at that conference. How does my right hon. friend explain the fact that the Canadian representatives at the imperial conference adopted a policy with regard to this matter which had been urged upon this House time after time by the Liberal Conservative party, and which this government had called upon its followers to vote down over and over again? In the session of 1900 Sir Charles Tupper moved a resolution in this House to the effect that Canada would never be satisfied with any policy short of one giving mutual trade preferences throughout the empire. That was voted down by our hon. friends opposite; and when we proposed a similar resolution in 1901, and again in 1902, it met with exactly the same fate. But let us see what the representatives of Canada themselves proposed at that colonial conference. The report of the conference, at pages 37 and 38, contains the following language, out of the mouths of the Canadian ministers who were present:

Meanwhile the Canadian ministers determined to present to the conference a resolution affirming the principle of preferential trade, and the desirability of its adoption by the colonies generally, and also expressing the opinion of the Prime Ministers of the colonies that His Majesty's government should reciprocate by granting preferential terms to the products of the colonies in the markets of the mother country.

After calling upon their followers in the House to vote down the proposals made by us in 1900, in 1901, and again in 1902, they go to this colonial conference, and propose the very thing they had voted down and derided as a humbug. How did my hon. friend expect to get a preference from the imperial government after telling them in 1897 that we had given our preference to the mother country in return for the splendid freedom bestowed on Canada. How could we consistently, as I pointed out last year, go to the colonial conference and ask for a preference for Canada in the markets of the mother country after we had told the people of the mother country in 1897 that Canada wanted nothing in return for the preference we had given, because it had been given in return for the splendid freedom bestowed upon us. But I will con-

tinue to quote the expressions which the Canadian ministers put forth at that conference:

The Canadian ministers desire it to be understood that they took this course with the strong hope and the expectation that the principle of preferential trade would be more widely accepted by the colonies and that the mother country would at an early day apply the same principle by exempting the products of the colonies from customs duties. If, after using every effort to bring about such a readjustment of the fiscal policy of the empire, the Canadian government should find that the principle of preferential trade is not acceptable to the colonies generally or to the mother country, then Canada should be free to take such action as might be deemed necessary in the presence of such conditions.

What is the meaning of the covert threat contained in the last sentence? Will my right hon. friend, when he rises to address the House, or the Minister of Finance, if he speaks on this motion, tell us what is the meaning of this language? We have been held up to derision and scorn in this House because we attacked the policy of granting a preference to the mother country without asking that there should be a preference to us in return. We have said that that preference should not have been given in pretended return for our freedom, that negotiations should have been carried on for a mutual trade preference throughout the empire, and that all our efforts should have been directed to that end, so that the whole empire, and Canada itself might in that way be strengthened. The jeers and scorn seem to belong rather to our hon. friends on the other side of the House at present.

If, after using every effort to bring about such a readjustment of the fiscal policy of the empire, the Canadian government should find that the principle of preferential trade is not acceptable to the colonies generally or the mother country, then Canada should be free to take such action as might be deemed necessary in the presence of such conditions.

That means, if it means anything, that the Canadian government, after telling the people of the mother country that they did not want any preference in the markets of the mother country, have now come to the conclusion that they do want a preference, and, wanting that preference, they threaten the mother country with a repeal of the British preference unless a corresponding preference in the markets of the mother country shall be afforded Canada. It means that if it means anything; and if it does not mean that, I will be glad if my right hon. friend, when he rises to speak, would be good enough to inform the House and the country just what that sentence is intended to convey to the people of the mother country on behalf of the people of Canada.

There is another matter connected with the colonial conference on which we would like to have a little information from the

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax).