

sweetened, the tariff in 1896 was 27½ per cent. Was that altered? No. Biscuits, unsweetened, were dutiable at 25 per cent in 1896. Was that altered? No. Jams and jellies, 3½ cents a pound, equal to about 35½ per cent. Was that altered? No. All the duties that made Paterson rich, and to which he referred in his speech, remained just the same. He asked if he were open to reproach when he proposed to remove a policy that had made everybody poorer, but had made him rich. No; he was not deserving reproach in that. But he is deserving of all the reproach that an indignant electorate can impose for not reducing duties that made him rich after having denounced them throughout the length and breadth of Canada. If he was robbing the people before, he is robbing them still.

I intend to deal very shortly, with another subject, that is the subject of a preference. I believe with one hon. gentleman who has spoken on this subject, that we should remove this matter as far as possible from sentiment. The question is sufficiently important to be dealt with on its merits. If the preference given by hon. gentlemen opposite has any merits, the people of Canada can well afford to acknowledge them and to give the government credit, but if it is not in the interest of the country, the government must expect to receive the criticisms they deserve. I shall endeavour to show in a few minutes that the policy was the most mistaken of any ever adopted in Canada. The first reason is, because hon. gentlemen opposite entered upon what the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright) called a flank movement. They entered on a different policy in 1898 from that which they had previously proposed. The Prime Minister had made a pledge to the people of Canada when he spoke in the city of London, in 1896. Dealing with the question of preferential trade, he declared that it was of paramount importance and, not only that, but attempted to show that the only chance the people had of getting it was to place his party in power. He went further and discussed the grounds on which we would expect to negotiate a policy of that kind. He said that England would not expect a system of free trade to be adopted, but that a revenue tariff would be made the ground of negotiation. He then pointed out the great advantage that would accrue from that. But when these hon. gentlemen came into power, the first thing they attempted to frame was the tariff of 1897, having two features, one a special tariff, and the other a reciprocal tariff. I wish to point out that to have taken that course made a preference with England absolutely impossible. How was it possible to have a preference with England when you proposed a reciprocal tariff with every country in the world? I say to hon. gentlemen opposite, and to ministers in particular, that when they adopted the reci-

procal tariff in 1897, they abandoned every notion of a preferential tariff with Great Britain. By the mere adoption of it, they precluded the possibility of a preferential tariff. England, it is true, came in, but on the same terms that every country in the world came in; therefore, it was to be a reciprocal tariff with the whole world, and no preference to England. There was no idea of negotiating for advantages to Canada by differential duties upon the products of other countries; that was laid aside by the very principle involved in a reciprocal tariff.

Now, what followed? When the hon. gentlemen passed that tariff, attention was called in this House by the leader of the opposition to the fact that a tariff of that kind conflicted with the Belgian and German treaties. It was denied by the hon. gentlemen. Even the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Sir Louis Davies), made a very able speech, as he always does, declaring that it did not interfere with those treaties. The hon. gentleman will not deny that; he declared explicitly that the tariff would escape those treaties. The hon. gentleman went to England to argue it before the law officers of the Crown, still maintaining, not a preferential policy, but a reciprocal policy, for the whole country. The object of the hon. gentleman, therefore, was to uphold a policy, not of a preference, but of reciprocity, with the whole world. Well, I believe they did the hon. gentleman the courtesy to listen to his argument, but they gave judgment long before they heard the argument. They told the hon. gentleman that two courses were open to him and to the government: Either to go back to Canada and repeal the whole reciprocal tariff, or to give England the whole preference as a condition of denouncing the treaty. I challenge the hon. gentleman to say that that was not the prime object, I challenge him to say that England would ever have denounced those treaties, if this government had not formally handed over the special preference to Great Britain and received nothing in return.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES (Sir Louis Davies). There was never any such suggestion, never the faintest hint.

Mr. CLANCY. Well, I tell my hon. friend that it does not inure much to the credit of the astute gentlemen who were in charge of affairs there, and who wanted to get the treaty denounced. Without a suggestion from Great Britain as my hon. friend says, and of their own free will, they had the treaties denounced without a preference in return. According to what the hon. gentleman says he offered, as a condition of England, denouncing those treaties, to give a preference in Canada without asking for anything. Why, it is worse than I was disposed to put it. So they had the alternative of coming home and meeting the

Mr. CLANCY.