

sentiment of the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Sir, let me quote to you the independent opinion of a man who is not in politics. Let me quote what he said when he was making a business statement to business men. I refer to a statement made a short time ago by Mr. Walker, the general manager of the Bank of Commerce, and I believe a friend of hon. gentlemen opposite. Speaking of the tariff in general he said :

But if, as seems probable, we are to witness a general decline in prices, we must not be slow to recognize what this may mean. As we said a year ago, we must hold our own against a nation fifteen times as large in people and in industries. We cannot stand against, as we have been forced to in the past, the process of absorbing a large part of the surplus product of the United States. It is not a question of which fiscal policy we like, it is a question of holding our own in a time of war. It will only be industrial war, it is true, but it may be as fierce and unrelenting as ordinary war, although the results cannot be so terrible.

Deeply interested as we are in Mr. Chamberlain's proposals, the vital question in tariffs for us at the moment is in connection with our nearest neighbours. After we have protected ourselves against the use of this country as a slaughter market for the United States, we must, in some measure, try to meet Mr. Chamberlain's proposals.

Here are the views expressed by a man who was not talking politics or trying to gain the favour of his audience, but a business man addressing other business men; and I take it that this is the feeling which exists in the country to-day, not only among those who belong to the Conservative party, but among all who really desire the prosperity of Canada. I hold, as I have always held, that the great error in the tariff of 1897 was the one-sided preference which hon. gentlemen opposite gave to Great Britain. My hon. friend from North Ontario (Mr. Grant) spoke yesterday of our enormous exports of butter, cheese, pork and wheat; but if the government in 1897, instead of giving a one-sided preference to Great Britain, had said to Great Britain, if you give us a preference in your markets, we will do the same to you; and if to-day we had a preference in the markets of Great Britain for our butter, our cheese, our hay, and all our agricultural products, what a boon it would be for the people of this country.

I see my hon. friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) here. I am glad he has come in. It is not by holding Mr. Chamberlain up to scorn that we are going to do any business in this country. Mr. Chamberlain's proposal is a business proposal. I am not, as my hon. friend well knows, in favour of curtailing in the least degree any of the privileges or liberties that we enjoy in this country. I am in favour of the greatest autonomy that can exist in this country. But it is not by holding Mr. Chamberlain up

to public hatred, or by ridiculing or denouncing him, that we are going to further the interests of Canada. The propositions of Mr. Chamberlain, if they ever materialize in Great Britain, are business propositions. He comes to us and says, we are willing to give a preference in our markets as you give us a preference in your markets. This is a question for agreement between Canada and England; and if in the course of making this agreement we come to the conclusion that the agreement is a good or advantageous one for this country, I say, whether the proposal comes from Mr. Chamberlain or from Sir Campbell-Bannerman or from any other man on the other side of the ocean, we should adopt it as being beneficial to the best interests of this country.

The right hon. leader of the government, as I said a moment ago, to show what the policy of the Conservative party on the fiscal question was, thought fit to quote from the Montreal 'Star.' I am going to show how fair it is to make such quotations by making another quotation. A little while ago we had an election in Montmagny, and I am glad to see here, though I would have preferred to see a Conservative, my hon. and young friend (Mr. Armand Lavergne) who represents that county. But what happened? My hon. friend went to the county of Montmagny as the candidate of the government. I believe that he was held over the political baptismal font by a Minister of the Crown. The chief whip of the government in the province of Quebec went down to conduct the campaign, and my hon. friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) also pitched his tent in that county and remained there throughout the election. In order to celebrate the victory of my hon. friend from Montmagny (Mr. Lavergne) there was a meeting held in Montreal of the La Ligue Nationaliste. Both my hon. friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) and my hon. friend from Montmagny (Mr. Lavergne) addressed that meeting, which was held in one of the public halls in the city of Montreal, and when my hon. friend from Montmagny came to this House to be introduced, he was presented by my right hon. friend, the leader of the government. Now, what is the platform of this nationalist league of which, I believe, my hon. friend from Labelle is the president or the chief organizer or the fac totum, and of which my hon. friend from Montmagny is a very active member as well as a follower and an admirer of my hon. friend from Labelle. Let me just quote the programme of this league. Here are its articles :

1. Opposition to all participation by Canada in the deliberations of the British parliament and in any imperial council.

That is a singular commentary on what my right hon. friend said in England when he exclaimed: 'Call us to your councils.'