

selves an imperishable monument. How did they make both ends meet? By spending the largest sum on consolidated funds account that has ever been expended in this country—by incurring a deficit of \$519,981 on current consolidated expenditure account alone. Yet, he says, they made both ends meet. And over and above this, they have spent on capital account \$4,000,000 and increased the debt by over \$3,000,000. And yet this kind of reckless statement is made in financial London to the statesmen and business men of Great Britain, that this Government had made both ends meet, and so had earned for themselves the plaudits of all good men. But there were some other admissions. There was, at one time, he said, in the Dominion, arising from causes which he could not explain, a sort of desire or premonition that the future of this country would be bound up with the future of the United States. Did my hon. friend try to explain that? Did he try to investigate the causes? Could he not have found them? Could he not have found them in the campaign of 1891, in which he and his party ran full tilt for discrimination against Great Britain and the closest commercial relations with the United States, as being the foundation of such an impression? And yet my hon. friend, again sheltering himself under the shade of that green bay tree, naively put it aside as something too deep for his explanatory powers to grapple with.

Sir Louis Davies is also reported as having said :

He observed that Canada, small as was her population, had fought the battle of life under a system of fiscal government that he did not approve of. He was a free trader.

Now, some one said the other night, in the course of this debate, that there were no free traders amongst the Liberals. I think it was the hon. member for Toronto (Mr. Bertram). If he did, I now ask him to revise his statement. When a man stands up in the middle of London and says to his audience: "I am a free trader," what does it mean? Does it mean that he is a revenue protectionist to the extent of 29.86 per cent? Surely not. But one impression could be given, namely, that he was a free trader, as the term is understood in Great Britain—a free trader of the good old Cobden school. The only impression could be that he stood on the very same platform with his leader Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was so good a free trader of the Cobden school, that he put away from him and Canada—which is the most serious part of it—the best opportunity we ever had of getting trade relations with the Empire which would be invaluable to us. He also took up the argument of the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright), that the policy of the past had been discrimination against Great Bri-

Mr. FOSTER.

tain and that the policy of this Government was just the reverse. But I have shown you how this Government has acted towards Great Britain. Later on, he went on to say, much the same as his leader :

That England has protected us with her army and fleets, she has given us civil and religious liberties, she has never asked us to contribute one cent towards that army and fleet. Out of the fulness of our heart and our love we have now yielded to the desire to cement more strongly the bond of union which ought to unite the mother country and the colonies, and are prepared to propose a preferential tariff, the result of which will be that British goods will be admitted to Canada much lower than any foreign goods.

Now, the date of this meeting I do not know, because it is not given here, but I take it, that it was probably after—yes, it was, as I see by the context—after the decision of the law officers of the Crown, that we were bound by the treaties. Now, if there was any meaning in that sentence, it means that these hon. gentlemen, having found out that they were mistaken, and having run through with this comedy of theirs, are now prepared, at the earliest date this session, to excise that article from their tariff and to place in the tariff a clause which shall give to Great Britain, and Great Britain alone, preferential advantages—not admitting any other country to a participation in them. I mention that to clinch the argument made by my hon. friend the other night and to add weight to it. But if we are to believe that, what are we to believe with reference to the statement of the hon. Finance Minister, who, when asked at Sheffield whether there would be any change in the tariff, declared :

We do not believe in tariff tinkering; it hurts business. Therefore, although I did not go so far as my free trade proclivities would have carried me, there will be no more important changes made at the next session.

Now, if this change is made, it will be a most important change; and there is, therefore, diametrical opposition between the statement of my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Sir Louis Davies) and the statement of my hon. friend the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding).

In another part the Minister of Finance was asked squarely the question: "Do you intend to give Great Britain exclusive preferential advantages by legislation?" And my hon. friend, with that caution which he exercised over much, because sometimes it does not conduce to clearness or perspicuity, replied pretty much in these words: I must tell you, Sir, in answer to that question, that having put our hand to the plough, we do not intend to turn back. Now, Mr. Speaker, that may be either a negative or a positive or nothing at all. I wish we could get a definite reply from my hon. friend. I suppose that if I were to meet