

The Belgian Consulate in Montreal gives notice to importers of Belgian goods that a protest has been entered to the Imperial Government, in London, against the non-application by the Government of the Dominion of Canada of the Anglo-Belgian Treaty of 1862, which guarantees, without any restriction, the most-favoured clause to Belgium in all the British colonies.

In consequence, importers of Belgium goods will be instructed to pass their customs entries under protest, and to forward a copy of the same to the Belgian General Consulate in Ottawa.

Montreal, April 27, 1897.

I would ask the Government what is their intention in regard to this announcement.

The **PRIME MINISTER** (Mr. Laurier). The answer of the Government is what has already been stated, that the Government do not admit that the German and Belgian treaties apply to the resolutions now before the House.

BRITISH GOODS AND CUSTOMS TARIFF.

Mr. **FOSTER**. Before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, I want to ask the Controller of Customs or the Finance Minister whether or not it was to be understood that, when an order was given to the customs officials to allow British goods in at one-eighth reduction, that included or excluded the British colonies?

The **MINISTER OF FINANCE** (Mr. Fielding). The decision of the Controller of Customs is that the only country at present entitled to the privilege of the reciprocal tariff is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. There may be other countries which may become entitled to those privileges upon representations, but the decision of the Customs Department is to apply that tariff at present to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and to no other countries.

Mr. **FOSTER**. Then, I have another question to ask, if my hon. friend will allow me, and that is, whether, up to the present time, any report has been made by the Controller of Customs, in accordance with that clause, to the Governor General in Council, and whether they have acted formally upon that report?

The **MINISTER OF FINANCE**. The judgment of the Government is that the Controller of Customs has ample authority, under the terms of the resolution, to act for himself, subject to any later action which the Governor in Council may be pleased to take, and therefore no report from the Controller of Customs was necessary to immediate action, and I think I am correct in stating that, while the Controller of Customs has discussed the subject, no formal order has been passed up to this moment on the subject.

Mr. **FOSTER**. Now, I want to ask the Minister of Finance if he has yet brought down those bank note contracts, which he promised so long ago: he has not been half

as prompt to fulfil that promise as he was to fulfil the promise he made to the coal men in Montreal.

The **MINISTER OF FINANCE**. Perhaps I found the coal men more reasonable. I had an opportunity to run through the papers for the first time to-day, and I think they will be completed and possibly laid on the Table to-morrow.

Mr. **FOSTER**. I also want to ask for the returns I moved for very early in the session as to the commissions and the commissioners appointed in reference to partisan offences. We want them very particularly.

Mr. **IVES**. Before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, I want to ask one question supplementary to those which my hon. friend has asked. I want to ask if British goods are now being admitted at the different customs ports at one-eighth off the ordinary tariff; if so, what proof of British origin is required by collectors; and whether the Controller of Customs or the Minister of Finance will lay on the Table at a very early moment the regulations which have been made for the proof of British origin of the goods admitted under the preferential arrangement?

The **CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS** (Mr. Paterson). I presume that the hon. gentleman would like me to lay on the Table the instructions sent to the different customs officials on that point?

Mr. **IVES**. Yes.

Mr. **McNEILL**. I would like to ask my hon. friend the Controller of Customs. In view of the fact that it is not yet determined whether Belgium and Germany have the right, irrespective of any treaty, to send their goods into our market on the strength of this resolution on equal terms with England, where the preference to England comes in.

The **MINISTER OF FINANCE**. May I be permitted to answer? The preference to England operates in this way, that to-day British goods are being admitted at the preferential rates, and the goods of the other countries are not.

Some hon. **MEMBERS**. Hear, hear.

Mr. **McNEILL**. Will my hon. friend say that if it is shown that under the clause Belgium and Germany have a right to come in, he will endeavour to prevent their coming in, or that he can prevent their coming in?

The **MINISTER OF FINANCE**. My hon. friend may safely assume that whatever we decide is right shall be done.

Mr. **McNEILL**. I did not at all refer—

Some hon. **MEMBERS**. Order.

Mr. **McNEILL**. My hon. friend will, I am sure, allow me to say that I did not at all refer to what my hon. friend might think