

Canada to repudiate that policy which has been maintained by successive governments in this country, not only by the Conservative government but by the Liberal government which succeeded. I should think, that would be entirely out of the question. The great difficulty that lies in the way of accomplishing a preference within the empire, unquestionably must lie in the fact that Great Britain is so confirmed in her belief apparently, that free trade such as she has to-day, is that which best suits her interests; that we can scarcely expect the mother country, with her experience, with the enormous measure of prosperity she has enjoyed under free trade, to abandon that system even if it could be shown that it would very largely be in the interest of her colonies for her to do so. The men who have charge of these matters in England have always treated this question on a business principle. They have balanced the trade which they might hope to develop with the colonies, against that enormous trade which they do with the rest of the world, and so far they always seem to have made up their mind that whatever they might hope to gain from the colonies they would more than lose in some other direction. That is perhaps the proper view for a British statesman to take. I have always been disposed to think, that when we were in this country discussing protection, as we did in 1878; and when the argument was advanced that protection was not a good thing because we should follow the example of the mother country and adopt free trade under which Great Britain has achieved such enormous success; had risen to such a position among the nations of the world, outranking beyond all comparison the others, and being facile princeps in the world from a manufacturing and commercial point of view—it always seemed to me that such an argument as that was absolutely out of the question so far as we were concerned. There was little reason to doubt that a country which had commenced her manufacturing career as a protective country and had with skill, courage, boldness among her seafaring population obtained control of all the seas, had shown that capacity for commerce which was evidenced by the enormous development of her trading companies—for instance the East India Company—I say that it always seemed to me that that country had laid sure and fast the foundation of her industries during a period of protection, and that now was ready to come into the arena armed at all points with success, braced, strengthened and fortified, with capital abundant; it always seemed to me that it was naturally the most obvious thing in the world for Great Britain to invite other countries to come into the free trade arena with her, because there she was a Triton amongst the minnows, without any opponents. There was neither indus-

try, nor experience, nor capital elsewhere in the world that could compete with her. The consequence was that the countries which did engage in this free trade dance with Great Britain did very soon find that they were paying the piper. But, the case of Great Britain is not ours; was not ours in 1878 when we adopted the protective system; is not ours to-day. Those other countries which did listen to the blandishments of Great Britain and did endeavour to compete with her under free trade conditions; where are they to-day? Have they continued the merry dance? Each one of them has had good reasons to change its opinion. Each one is now as rapidly as possible withdrawing from that position into which it was led, and as rapidly as possible placing itself in the position in which Great Britain was when she commenced her career. They are pressing Great Britain as hard as they can in the markets of the world, and are taking advantage of her adherence to her old system in her own markets, and are closing their markets absolutely against her. Under those circumstances it cannot be expected that for some time to come—although the date may not be so far distant as at this moment it seems—it cannot be expected that Great Britain should reverse or much modify her free trade system. She believes it is the best for her and very possibly it is the best for her, situated as she is. And so long as it is so, it is better in the interest of the empire; it is better in our interest (to the great extent to which we rely upon the support and protection of that great country); it is better for us all that she should maintain that course which would keep her at the zenith of her power and wealth and prestige. But, if we are to concede to the mother country that right; if we are going to justify in her the course by which she shapes her policy, by the rule that she shall do that which is best for her own people living within her own borders; then I say unquestionably, following her example, it is our duty as component parts of the empire—even looking at it as an Imperial matter—to develop our country and to follow that course of policy in this country which will give us the greatest possible gain, advantage, and development in the Canada in which we are living.

It seems perfectly clear that every component part of the empire, even regarding it from an Imperial standpoint, can best serve the interests of all, can best strengthen that great and world-wide empire which we recognize to-day, by each within its own sphere, under that policy which is best adapted to it, developing its powers, its wealth, its resources, and its population. So far we must stand firmly upon the principle that Canada must be for the Canadians, and that we cannot in respect of such a matter as the convenience of the mother country give such a preference as will imperil, or injure, or weaken,