

culties prevailed, and that we were resolved to go forward with the firm conviction that even though the views we held could not be sustained by Her Majesty's Government, the outcome of the whole matter would be to present the Belgian and German treaties in a new light and one which was likely to bring about good results. Speaking at the time when I was asking the adoption of this new policy, I used the following language :—

Now, I shall not undertake to pass any judgment upon this very important question of the most-favoured-nation clauses of these Imperial treaties. It is an international question, and it is well that we should reserve our final judgment upon it. We recognize that it is a question upon which we shall ultimately have to consult with Her Majesty's Government, and I need not say that any view that may be taken by Her Majesty's Government will be considered by the Government of Canada with the respect that is due to any representation that might be made upon any subject, but above all, on the question of an international character. I say that it does not seem fair and reasonable that we should be obliged, while we are offering certain terms not to Great Britain only, but to all countries which will place themselves in the same position—it does not seem to be fair and reasonable that we should be obliged to extend the privileges of this schedule, which we call a reciprocal tariff, to nations which are not willing to do anything in return.

I admit there may be difficulties in the way. It may be possible that the view we take of this matter is not the correct view, but we say it is only fair and reasonable in the interests of Canada, in the interests of fair trade between ourselves and Great Britain, that we should to-day take the position that the favoured-nation clauses do not apply ;—

I regret that I have mislaid for the moment the page on which I have extended the balance of the sentence.

Mr. DAVIN. It is as follows :—

—and that this resolution, which I put upon the Table of the House, will only extend to such countries as are prepared to give admission to our products under fair terms.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will proceed with the reading, because it is very good sense.

Mr. DAVIN. Sir Charles Tupper then said—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. At that stage of the discussion the leader of the Opposition exchanged a few words with me in which he took the ground that the treaty in express terms stood in our way. I continue the quotation :

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Even if it does, the world moves, and possibly the step we are taking to-night may have the effect—and that may be one of the advantages of it—of drawing the attention of Her Majesty's Government and of the English public to the position of those treaties, and thus opening up the question. Meantime, Sir, recognizing the difficulties, recognizing the possibilities that our judg-

ment may be mistaken, and recognizing the obligations we may owe as part of the Empire, we intend for the present to take the view that inasmuch as we offer these conditions to other nations, if they do not see fit to accept them, the responsibility rests upon them and not upon Canada.

From these passages, Mr. Speaker, it will be seen that from the beginning we recognized the debatable character of the subject, and the doubts and difficulties which were before us ; and we went forward, not with the assurance that the views which we had advanced would in all respects prevail, but that even if our interpretation of the treaties should not be upheld, we should place the question before the public in such a manner as would show most effectually the objectionable character of the Belgian and German treaties.

True, Sir, the hon. leader of the Opposition said from the beginning that there was no ground whatever for our contention, and that no good could come from our action. But better authorities than he admitted that the grounds we had taken demanded grave consideration. A great organ of British opinion, usually well informed in Imperial and colonial matters, the London "Times," emphatically declared that it was doubtful whether these treaties applied to such a case as was created by the action of Canada. Her Majesty's Ministers in London deemed the position taken by our Government so important that they reserved their judgment until the question could be fully argued before the law officers of the Crown.

Our views were presented to Her Majesty's Ministers and to the law officers and to the British public by my hon. friends the Prime Minister and the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, assisted in the legal argument by Hon. Edward Blake. Sir, what was the result ? The Imperial authorities held that under the treaties in question Germany and Belgium were entitled to receive in the British colonies the same tariff conditions as were available to Great Britain.

Well, Sir, if the matter had ended there, if that were the whole story, undoubtedly my hon. friends opposite would be in a position to tell us that our policy had borne no good fruit. But we all know that the matter did not end there. While these negotiations were going on, while arguments were being heard before the law officers of the Crown in England, as to the position of Canada under these treaties, a great public opinion was being created in the United Kingdom and throughout the Empire which became a potent factor in settling this question. For the first time the people of England were made to fully understand what these treaties meant, and how they stood as a barrier between the mother country and her colonies. Public men in this country had been talking of preferential trade for years, but they had never got beyond the stage of talking. If we had followed on the same