

English market, which they desire, can be had for the asking. Year after year they have endeavoured to persuade themselves of that. I suppose, that, like a man who tells the same story again and again until he persuades himself that it is true, many hon. gentlemen opposite have persuaded themselves they can easily obtain that preference in the English market. We thought that the utterances of the English press, the articles published in the great British journals, the statements of the leading public men in both political parties, and most of all the statements of such men as Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and the Duke of Devonshire, made it perfectly clear that that preference, which hon. gentlemen opposite believed it was so easy to get, could not be obtained in the English market, and that view we still hold. The only new incident that has occurred that I can recall since I last discussed this subject here, was that which occurred in connection with the meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce in London last summer. There the question was raised in a very gentle and modest form; in the form of a resolution asking Her Majesty's government to appoint a royal commission to inquire into the question of Imperial trade. But even in that innocent form, so innocent and harmless that it is difficult to see how any one would oppose it, we find that when they asked a hearing before the British Prime Minister to present their resolution, he stated that the time was not opportune to consider it and he declined to receive the deputation. And then, discouraged and discomfited by the illustrious Prime Minister of Great Britain, they went to the Colonial Secretary. They made a visit to Mr. Chamberlain, who, I have no doubt, received them with that great courtesy and consideration which he always extends to Canadians. They tried to persuade Mr. Chamberlain that this preference should be granted, and their own records and reports show us—and can be quoted if necessary—that Mr. Chamberlain told them courteously but firmly and emphatically that the thing could not be entertained for a moment unless they were prepared to give up their tariff protection against Great Britain. That was the basic principle of Mr. Chamberlain's statement, and these gentlemen were not pre-

pared to give that up, nor would I have been prepared to give it up if I had been in their place.

Mr. MACLEAN. Mr. Chamberlain may have to change his mind like others.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Possibly. My hon. friend (Mr. Maclean) will do me the justice to say that I am dealing with things of the past and present, and we will not say too much of the future, but I say that as respects the past, in the year 1897, when we adopted our tariff, that policy of a preference in the English market was not possible. It was not possible in 1898; it was not possible in 1899; it was not possible in 1900, when the Prime Minister of Great Britain refused to even receive a deputation to talk about it; it was not possible when the distinguished Colonial Secretary told the deputation that he could not entertain the matter unless they were prepared to abandon the tariff against Great Britain.

Mr. KEMP. May I ask the hon. gentleman (Hon. Mr. Fielding) where he got his information in reference to his observation that Mr. Chamberlain refused to receive the deputation?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. My hon. friend (Mr. Kemp) has misunderstood me. I did not say that Mr. Chamberlain refused to see the deputation. I am aware that the deputation of which my hon. friend (Mr. Kemp) was a member, called on Mr. Chamberlain. What I did say was that the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, refused to see the deputation which only asked the privilege of presenting this bald and not very strong resolution.

Mr. KEMP. There was no deputation to Mr. Chamberlain.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Does the hon. gentleman say there was no deputation to Mr. Chamberlain?

Mr. KEMP. Not this last summer.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I hold in my hand the report of the delegate of the Ottawa Board of Trade, who was one of the deputation which called upon Mr. Chamberlain, and who describes Mr. Cham-