

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I suppose in making that change in the tariff you will apply it to the British colonies as well as to Great Britain ?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—It is intended that they shall come in as New South Wales does now. That is my present opinion. Of course, I can only foreshadow what it will be, but there will be an opening for British colonies to come in certainly. The other countries that came in were the Argentine Republic, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Persia, Roumania, Venezuela and Switzerland. I may say the reason those countries come in is this : they have treaties containing the favoured-nation clause. That clause gives them equal privileges with Great Britain in the markets of her colonies. If you remove the privilege that Germany and Belgium now enjoy, then no other countries can come in except under the act of the parliament of Canada, and that is our own. In 1895 we gave France a preference in our markets on certain articles. I presume all those countries would be entitled to equal privileges with France in our markets in regard to the articles referred to in that treaty. I am inclined to think that would be the legal effect of it. So hon. gentlemen will see, I hope, before this parliament rises that we shall have succeeded in placing Great Britain and the colonies in the position that we all along hoped they would enjoy.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—On the free trade basis ?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—No ; it is our 25 per cent preference for the present.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—Do you call that free trade ?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—It is a preference over every other country.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—It is a march towards free trade.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Well, I am just as strong a free trader as my hon. friend is, but I do not think it would be the part of a prudent statesman to precipitate this country into absolute destruction.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—That was not your opinion three years ago.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Always my opinion. I hope some day or other to see the transition, but the transition certainly cannot be a rapid one. You must pay regard to interests that have grown up under the sanction of parliament. It would be monstrous to adopt any other course. When Great Britain adopted free trade, I think it required about 25 years.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—No, one year.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—There was first a sliding scale.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—It was reduced to one shilling a bushel on grain, and that remained for four years.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I am not speaking of one article. There was a sliding scale. It was very many years before they finally launched into free trade, and our progress must be equally slow and gradual. I do not propose to discuss economic questions with my honourable friend from Shell River, but I think it will gratify him that our importations from Great Britain are increasing. Of course, so far as the fiscal year ending last June is concerned, there could be no proper conclusion drawn from the twelve and a half per cent preference, because our tariff was only adopted in the end of April, two months before.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—The returns that you refer to show an increase of 85 per cent in our exports and 7 per cent only in our imports.

Hon. Mr. McCALLUM—That is all right.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—What I say is there has been an increase in our importations from Great Britain. The changes of trade do not immediately occur after the adoption of any fiscal policy.

Hon. Mr. McCALLUM—Certainly the imports will increase as the population increases.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I do not wish to further discuss this question, but I think I have submitted to the House reasons that ought to warrant the conclusion to which I came, that in no other way could we have