

sure whether he considers that the rejection of this agreement had resulted in higher prices or in lower prices. He did not make that very plain to me, and I do not know whether he desires to make it plain now. He asserted also that the rejection of this proposal had resulted in a divergence of sentiment between the east and the west, and that the people in the west felt themselves aggrieved and oppressed because this compact had not commended itself to the people of Canada as a whole. I would like to say to the right hon. gentleman this, that if any such sentiment does exist in western Canada to-day—and I am not satisfied that it does exist—it is due to the teaching of his own friends and supporters.

So far as his argument with respect to the relations between Canada and the United States is concerned, I say that I for one in this country have always endeavoured to adopt a course which would maintain and improve, if they could be improved, the friendly relations which now happily exist between the British Empire and the great republic to the south. I hope that those friendly relations always will be maintained; and I hope that the approaching celebration of the completion of a hundred years of peace between the two countries will be carried out in Canada as well as in the United States in a manner worthy of so great an occasion. But I venture to think, Mr. Sreaker, that Canada will lose neither the friendship nor the respect of the United States by a policy which will firmly maintain the control of Canadian affairs by our own parliament and which will find its highest ideal and expression in the growth and development of this Dominion as an autonomous nation within the British Empire.

The right hon. gentleman went on to speak of the project of preferential trade within the empire. He thought that he found inconsistencies in the views of the members of the cabinet in this and in other respects. It seemed to me that the right hon. gentleman, so far as I could understand the purport of his remarks, expressed, within five minutes of each other, views that were absolutely inconsistent. For, in the first place he sneered at the British imperialists, speaking of their aspirations and ideals in a very slighting way; and then, a few sentences afterwards, he described himself as their only hope and said they would have to come to him in the end. I can only say that I think they will be in a very distressful and a pitiable condition when they come to that last resort. For the right hon. gentleman knows his own record in this matter. Every hon. member of this House knows that record. In 1896 the right hon. gentleman adopted the policy of Sir Charles Tupper in regard

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to inter-imperial preference. He said that if he were given power he could and would do every thing to bring about a system of mutual trade preferences within the empire that Sir Charles Tupper would do. And he went to the mother country in 1897 and told the people there that Canada did not desire a preference in the British markets. And for what reason? Because Canada did not wish to see the mother country cursed with that system of protection which he said had been the bane of this country for many years. And I need only point out, as bearing on the question of inconsistency—if that is to be dealt with—that the right hon. gentleman for the next fifteen years maintained in Canada the very system which he had so strongly denounced before the people of Great Britain. In this respect my right hon. friend seems to be almost an unconscious humourist. For, after all, when he is dealing with the question of reciprocity within the empire on the one hand, and the question of reciprocity with the great republic to the south on the other hand, does it not appeal to him that, even putting aside all national considerations and taking the question purely from the economic standpoint, it would be infinitely more to the advantage of the people of Canada to seek reciprocal trade relations within the empire, with those who are our customers, rather than with the producers of the great nation to the south who are our competitors in the markets of the world. I think that within the range of this empire, having regard to the great variety of its products, there is infinitely better scope for the bringing about of reciprocal trade arrangements than were to be found in the scheme which the right hon. gentleman presented to parliament.

The right hon. gentleman dealt with the constitution of the cabinet and expressed very grave dissatisfaction with it. Indeed, in the closing part of his resolution he adopted a most extraordinary course—one which I have never known to be followed in the House before—of submitting to His Royal Highness the Governor General that the constitution of the cabinet ought not to receive the approval of this House. I have never heard that it was the duty of the King or the representative of the King to concern himself with what should or should not receive the approval of parliament in that regard. My right hon. friend has launched a constitutional idea that is new to this generation in asking His Royal Highness the Governor General to express any opinion as to what ministers should or should not be approved by parliament. I have always understood that under the modern system of constitutional government, liberty of opinion had been secured