

Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Davies), and it has remained the policy of our party ever since. But this application of the principle to the tariff scheme is a thing for which the credit is due to those who have framed this particular tariff, and I think the method by which it has been applied justifies my statement that this tariff is a stroke of genius in this regard.

The first comparison that occurs to our minds for this preferential tariff is with the so-called preferential scheme with which our friends on the other side have seen fit to identify themselves. I say "identify themselves," for I take it for granted that when the hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) moved a resolution the other day in the British Empire League to ask for preferential trade relations with the mother country, he definitely committed himself and his party to that as their platform. Now, let us compare the two platforms. The Liberal platform says to the mother country: You have been admitting our goods free for many years, you have been giving us favours in other respects—you have been protecting us with your army and navy, you have been standing between us and those who bully us or take advantage of us; now, it is our turn to do a little something for you, and we propose to do it by admitting your goods at a rate 25 per cent less than the goods of countries that have not shown us special favours. Here is a free offer of considerable privileges to the mother country. But, on the other hand, the British Empire League and the Conservative party seem to have limited themselves to the one idea that we must get something out of Great Britain. They have not been thinking of doing anything for England, but of asking England to do something for us. Their sole idea is that Great Britain should put a tax—I think it was figured down to 5 per cent on one occasion—on the breadstuffs bought from countries other than British colonies, and this at a time when we were doing nothing whatever for Britain, when we were, as a matter of fact, taxing the imports from Great Britain more highly than the imports from the United States. Now that the Government's preferential arrangement in favour of Great Britain is brought down to this House, where do we find the leader of the Opposition? We find him still sticking to his request for favours from Great Britain and refusing to endorse this scheme for giving favours to Great Britain.

Mr. McNEILL. I am sure my hon. friend (Mr. Casey) does not mean to be unfair, but when he says that the proposal was that England should levy a tax of 5 per cent on commodities coming from foreign countries while we should do nothing in return, he is unintentionally unfair. For the proposal was that we should also levy a tax upon the goods of foreign countries

Mr. CASEY.

and should devote the proceeds of that tax to purposes of Imperial defence and inter-communication. So we were agreeing to do something.

Mr. CASEY. I think that was part of the scheme, but as this tax was to be put on food products, which we do not import from any other country, I do not see where the fund was to come from or where the benefit to England would be.

Mr. McNEILL. It was not on food products alone, but on all imports.

Mr. CASEY. That is a more extended scheme than the scheme as I understood it, when I had last to do with the affairs of the league. At that time the scheme was for preferential treatment of food products by Great Britain. It seems they now ask Great Britain to give us the preference in other goods as well as food products. I do not see that we are likely to send manufactured goods to England. So the scheme resolves itself back into what I said—that England was to tax her food stuffs for the benefit of the colonies that produced these things. That is what I have understood the real gist of it to be, and I still understand it so, notwithstanding the explanation as to the phraseology of the scheme by my hon. friend (Mr. McNeill).

Now, I think the policy urged by the British Empire League and the Conservative party is rather a mean policy. On the other hand, I think the Liberal policy is a generous one, and I think so notwithstanding the alleged objection that the German and Belgian and other treaties may interfere with the unique position of Great Britain in relation to this tariff at the present time. We have heard to-day the answer given by the Department of Customs to the Belgian Consul, who asked that goods from his country might come in under this arrangement. It is quite clear that our Government does not admit that our tariff propositions compel us to admit German and Belgian goods under that preferential schedule.

If it did, I do not see how my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition could urge anything against it. The proceedings in connection with the French Treaty, which was ratified in 1895, although it was made some time before, must be fresh in our minds. We remember how that hon. gentleman, when High Commissioner in London, negotiated a treaty with France, a treaty which not only bound us to admit reciprocally certain articles from France at a low rate of duty, but to admit also any goods from France at the same reduced rate of duty which we might grant to any other country. The hon. gentleman negotiated that treaty himself. That treaty was a little too strong for the then Finance Minister (Mr. Foster), who was the hon. gentleman's superior for the time being, and he told the House so:

On the other hand, as the treaty is signed, Canada agrees to give France "most-favoured-nation" treatment, not only on the articles men-