

should take off taxation by granting a preference in favour of colonial products. We have not failed to press these views upon the imperial authorities from time to time, and in various ways. When the duties were imposed, representations were made, but without success. We resolved to carry the question into the colonial conference to be held in London in connection with the coronation; and at that conference this subject occupied a great deal of attention. It will be remembered that in a speech by Mr. Chamberlain at the beginning of the conference, he expressed the opinion that the preference granted by us, while of value as a mark of the good-will of Canada, and much to be appreciated as a matter of sentiment, was nevertheless not of much material value; and he added that if the question of granting a preference in the mother country could be entertained at all, it would have to be by the granting of some further substantial preference on the part of Canada. While we regretted that Mr. Chamberlain took that view, we felt that we should not on that account fail to press our views on the other side. This statement of Mr. Chamberlain is very interesting, however, as an evidence of his attitude on the question. For a long time it was commonly represented by our opponents in this country that Mr. Chamberlain had been making speeches avowing his readiness to grant a preference, and similar claims had been made with respect to the Duke of Devonshire. But what do we find? We find that not only was Mr. Chamberlain never disposed to grant us any preference, but he has now said that before he could consider the question of a mutual preference to be within the realm of practical policy, we in Canada would be obliged to consider whether we would not give a further preference to British goods. It is therefore perfectly clear that the impression which some hon. gentlemen opposite have had for years regarding Mr. Chamberlain's attitude on this question is an entire delusion. Perhaps in some respects it is to be regretted that the full proceedings of the conference were not made public. However, there were good reasons for the course that was pursued. It was understood from the beginning that the proceedings were to be confidential, and some of the gentlemen present, relying on that, discussed matters with

the freedom of confidential negotiations. To have published all the speeches after that understanding would of course have been a breach of faith. In a conference of that character there are always arising not only national but international questions, and it would not be proper for matters of that kind to be made public unless it were so understood from the beginning. There is no room, however, for any misunderstanding as to what happened on the question of preferential trade, or as to the position taken by the Canadian government. Not only was the subject discussed again and again in the conference, but we had frequent opportunities of discussing it with the British ministers individually, and particularly with Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Gerald Balfour, the president of the Board of Trade. We contended, as appears in the blue-book containing the proceedings of the conference, that the preference was not only of sentimental value but also of great material value to the British trader and manufacturer. While we contended that the preference already granted was of more value to Great Britain than the British officials had been disposed to admit, we told them that if the imperial government were prepared to adopt the preferential policy and give our products exemption from the duties now imposed or hereafter to be imposed on foreign goods, we would be prepared to grant some further preference, subject to certain conditions which were clearly laid down. We frankly stated that we could not undertake to give that further preference in a manner which would operate to the disadvantage of our own industries. As between the British manufacturer and the Canadian manufacturer, we thought we had gone as far in the way of reduction of duties as we could. But we pointed out that Canada consumed a large quantity of goods imported from foreign countries; and in return for the preference which we sought for Canada, we were prepared to so rearrange our tariff as to give Great Britain a further preference, not over the Canadian manufacturer, but over the foreign competitor.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The views of the Canadian government on that question are referred to in the memorandum