

whereby, freed from competition, they can calculate how much can be abated from the price to be paid to the producer, and how much can be added to the price which the consumer should pay. And this, Sir, although only two short months have elapsed since the 21st of September. Within this short space of time the Canadian people are already commencing to suffer for having listened on that day to the voice of passion and not to the voice of reason. Notwithstanding what has been said by my hon. friend from Calgary (Mr. Bennett), I maintain to this day, and I believe it will become more and more apparent as time goes on, that upon the 21st of September it was not the voice of reason that prevailed, but the voice of passion and prejudice.

My hon. friend stated that had this agreement for the interchange of natural commodities between the two countries been adopted, British connection itself would have been in danger. Sir, this assertion was borrowed from and I believe largely inspired by that class of imperialists who hope to build up the British Empire and solidify it, not by removing the shackles of trade, but by intervening and creating in all the constituent parts of the British Empire, between one nation and the other within the empire, new shackles. The defeat of reciprocity has been hailed with glee in Great Britain by this class of imperialists and their shouts of triumph have been reverberated week after week and at meeting after meeting. Now they express their hope, their certainty, that before long British manufactured goods would be the action of the present Canadian ministry be admitted to compete freely in Canada with Canadian manufacturers. These men are about to be undeceived, they are undeceived this very day, and they will learn by the mouth of my hon. friend (Mr. Bennett) what is in store for them because he stated in so many words—I was careful to take down his words—that he hoped to see reciprocity within the empire for natural products, but never would he see the day when British manufactured products would be admitted to compete on a footing of equality with Canadian manufactured products. Sir, as I have already said the imperialists of Great Britain are already undeceived, and they will know to-morrow, if they do not know to-day, what false calculations they have been making. They will know that with the men who are now in office there is no more hope for British competition than there was for American competition. Moreover those who, as they thought, voted for British connection will learn by and by that if they are to reach the goal of their ambition they will have to come back to the Liberal party who first

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

introduced the British preference. And here I make bold to say that the last elections were carried under false pretenses. Sir, I know there are men on the other side of the House who imagined that in rejecting the agreement which we made with the United States they did a great service to England and to the empire. I respect their views, I will not quarrel with them, but let me say that in my humble judgment far from rendering a great service to England they have done an injury to England and to the British Empire. To-day, Sir, the world is in a state of transition, the old civilization is passing away, and a new civilization is coming. The period of conquests, of domination, and of land aggrandisement by force is passing away, but it has not so far passed away that at the present time we see Germany, France, Italy and Spain endeavouring to snatch slices of territory in North Africa. Yet we are so far advanced in the new civilization that after all there is no fear of a general conflict resulting from this painful state of things. But were we living in an earlier day and not in 1911 it is probable that there would have been in Europe a general conflagration on account of what is now taking place in North Africa. In this new condition of the future, a condition not of war but of peace, the friendship of the United States would have been the best asset that England could possess. My hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Foster) has been at pains to explain that in the attitude of the present Canadian government there was no hostility to the United States and so did the Prime Minister. Sir, I do not believe that any Canadian in his views was influenced by any hostility to the American people; but, Sir, I may perhaps say that I regret the tone of certain newspapers, the tone of certain public men, which was such as to create enmity between the two peoples. Let me say this: Whilst the United States can find no complaint in the attitude taken by the Canadian people—in my judgment the Canadian people were wrong, but whether right or wrong I place my country above everything. While the United States could find no fault with us for the attitude we took—wrong in my judgment as it was—I still say that we have lost a great opportunity of improving and increasing the friendship between the United States and England.

I said a moment ago that my hon. friend had been at pains to explain his attitude on this subject to the American people. Let me quote for his information a statement from a very moderate paper, the New York Times. I quote from the issue of that paper of 23rd Sept. :—

Speaking about the various degrees of deadness, President Taft's plan of arbitration with