

What would be the possibilities of such a step if it were taken?

We sell our goods in England, we send our wheat, our butter, our cheese, all our natural products, but there we have to compete with similar products from the United States, from Russia, and from other nations.

Just see what a great advantage it would be to Canada if the wheat, cheese, and butter which we would send to England should be met in England with a preference over similar products of other nations.

The possibilities are immense.

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the new and progressive Secretary of the Colonies, has declared that the time has come when it is possible to discuss that question.

But, sir, if England is going to give us that preference, England would expect something from us in return.

England does not expect that we should take her own system of free trade, such as she has it, but I lay it before you, that the thing the English people would expect in return is that instead of a principle of protection we should adopt the revenue form of tariff pure and simple.

These are the conditions upon which we can have the boon.

The Canadian people have now to make their choice.

What will be their choice?

Their choice will be for a revenue tariff and for preferential trade.

And if my memory serves me right on that occasion the hon. gentleman was going to appoint a commission, and by the next boat that sailed after the general election would send that commission over to England to negotiate or discuss such a system as the one outlined in his London speech. But instead of adopting that course he adopted the contrary course, and it was with astonishment that the people of Canada heard of the attitude which he took upon that occasion in opposing unequivocally the proposition then made by the Colonial Secretary that the colonies should enter into a discussion for the adoption of a system of preferential trade with the empire. But it would seem that when the glittering bauble was held out to that hon. gentleman upon that occasion, and when the Cobdenites of London bowed down before him and cried "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," he could not resist declaring himself in favour of the doctrine of free trade, which previous to his departure for England he strenuously opposed. The president of the Cobden Club said:

There is a party amongst us who would willingly discriminate against German and Belgian goods, and who look upon the denunciation of the German and Belgian treaties as a step towards what they have been pleased to call commercial federation of the empire—a system under which commercial union between different parts of the empire would be fostered by laws excluding or discouraging foreign goods. If this was to be the consequence of what you have done, I need scarcely say that we of the Cobden Club should

not now be here. It is because we believe that your efforts are founded on an opposite principle, and will be followed by opposite results, that we, followers of Adam Smith, and of Peel, of Bright, and of Cobden, are here to congratulate and to thank you. You do not ask us to abate one jot of our free trade principles; you ask for no preferential treatment; you make yourselves as large a step in the direction of free trade as your present circumstances will permit, and you desire to treat the rest of the world as you are now treating us. It is needless for me to dwell upon the part which you, sir, have had in this great movement, nor is this the time or place to enlarge upon its political and moral bearing. Let me conclude, however, by saying that in our opinion, as in that of the great man whose name we bear, the statesman who helps to remove the artificial barriers that short-sighted legislation has erected between nations furthers not only the material interests, but the highest aspirations of humanity.

After these noble sentiments we find our premier accepting the medal and responding as follows:

Deeply touched was Sir Wilfrid at the testimonial conveyed to him, for, as he put it, the "poor effort he had made in behalf of free trade. In Canada we have had the protection system, and we have to deal with it gradually and carefully." The only reform we have achieved is this—that no duty shall be levied simply for protection, but only for revenue.

Hon. Mr. POWER—Nothing very wrong about that.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—Only extreme inconsistency between professions and acts.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Only it is not correct—that is all.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—The *London Daily News* speaking of his acceptance of the Cobden medal and his free trade professions:

These particular treaties are denounced because they would have prevented a reduction in the Canadian tariff, which is the first step to free trade for the Dominion. Sir Wilfrid Laurier so regards it, and nothing would give him greater pleasure than to open the Canadian ports as freely as Sir Robert Peel opened the ports of England. He is not entirely opposed to any system of free trade within the British Empire which would involve, protective duties upon goods manufactured or material grown outside, and he is credited with having driven that non sense out of Mr. Chamberlain's head. The recognition of the Cobden Club could not therefore have been more appropriately bestowed.

It seems to me that the prime minister of this country will require the rest of his natural days to reconcile the inconsistent positions which in one short year he took upon this important question. My hon. friend the leader of this House, in his address, spoke of the utter impossibility of any English statesman successfully advocating such a system of preferential trade within the empire. I am surprised at the little