

intelligent treatment of this question by the Government of the day, which, while it has not pleased us all, and has in some instances seemingly sacrificed interests in a way not readily appreciable by a business man, has on the whole been broad, coherent and consistent, and a due regard for the present and future of Canada should restrain Ministers of the Crown and others from intimating that the tariff has in it no stability, and that the safe position for business to assume is that which I once discovered on a tombstone: "Stranger, be thou all eye, all ear, all expectation, lest death steal upon thee in an unwary moment."

Now, Sir, the hon. gentleman did not speak very long upon that subject. But he devoted some three or four hours of his speech to discussing the question of preferential trade, and especially in an effort to show my own derelictions in that regard. The hon. gentleman was kind enough to speak of the manner in which I had endeavoured to represent Canada at the Jubilee celebration, and I thank him for the kind words that he used in that connection. But at the same time he did me the honour of attacking me personally for the course which I had pursued in England in reference to the matter of preferential trade. I must say, however, that the attack which he made upon me was very moderate compared with the attacks which are made every day by the press which supports him. In the press which supports him I am represented every day as a traitor. Treason is a word which I find in almost every article of those newspapers. And, by the way, I may mention that even the hon. gentleman made use of the same expression in one portion of his remarks. Well, Sir, the word treason does not affect me very much. I am getting accustomed to it. Why, Sir, in the press which receives inspiration from my hon. friend, in my own province, for months and for years I was daily denounced as a traitor to my race and to my religion; while in the press that supports him in the other provinces, the theme upon which they enlarge is that I am a traitor to the whole country. All I can say is that there is about as much truth in the one charge as there is in the other. But what is the next charge brought against me by the hon. gentleman? He says that I have turned my back while in England upon the cause of preferential trade. Let me give him my answer—it will be direct and simple. My answer is, that if to-day the idea of preferential trade is no longer a vain and idle one, if there is any spark of living truth in it, if it is ever to become an accomplished fact, the first step towards the realization of this idea was taken last summer when I was in England. Sir, the hon. gentleman knows it quite well. Let me put a question to him. Is it not a fact that up to last summer all theories of preferential trade within the Empire were met with one insurmountable difficulty? The insurmountable obstacles was the ex-

istence of the German and Belgian treaties. The hon. gentleman knows it right well. The press that he inspires knows it as well as he does. Why, the boys in the streets that sell the newspapers know it as well as he does, everybody knows it. But in order to bring him once more fresh to the attention and to the knowledge of his blind and deaf followers, let me give them here now the very text of the treaty with the German Zollverein:

Article 7. The stipulations of the preceding articles, 1 to 6, shall also be applied to the colonies and foreign possessions of Her Britannic Majesty. In those colonies and possessions the produce of the States and the Zollverein shall not be subject to any higher or other import duties than the produce of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or of any other country of the like kind, nor shall the exportations from those colonies or possessions to the Zollverein be subject to any other or higher duties than the exportation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

It is quite plain that so long as these treaties were in existence, all idea of a preferential tariff within the Empire had to be abandoned. Sir, the fact is well known to the hon. gentleman and to his friends, because they have laboured also to obtain a repeal of these obnoxious treaties; but they laboured in vain, they laboured perhaps with more zeal than discretion or judgment. We all recollect the most pathetic speech delivered by my hon. friend last year in this House wherein he recited the efforts which had been made by his party to obtain the denunciation of these treaties, the efforts made by Sir Alexander Galt when High Commissioner in London, the efforts made by himself while he occupied the same position, the efforts made by Sir John A. Macdonald, by Sir John Abbott, by Sir John Thompson, by my hon. friend from York (Mr. Foster). Yet all these efforts, all these solemn protests and petitions made in season and out of season, were without avail. Sir, according to an old Greek legend the Empire of the world was promised to the man who could untie the Gordian knot. And there were ambitious men at that time, there were Tuppens in those days as there are now, and the Tuppens of those days wore out their fingers in the attempt to unloose the intricate cords. They failed, every one of them, until at last Alexander of Macedon came, and he simply solved the difficulty by cutting the knot. Well, Sir, the Alexander of Macedon who has solved the question in our day is my hon. friend the Minister of Finance. It was he who solved the difficulty by cutting the knot when in his tariff last year, he assumed the position that England had authority to denounce the treaties, or he could refuse the offer which we made to her. Such was the position when I left for England. If I had followed the example of the hon. gentleman, I should have gone about to advocate preferential trade. I should have asked