

tion. I think, however, that I understand, in a measure, his silence upon this occasion; I can quite understand that a general discussion of the policy of preferences cannot be quite palatable to him at the present moment. I should like to pay to him a tribute for the extreme grit and perseverance—which should be a splendid example to younger men—with which he has pursued this question of inter-Imperial trade. My only regret is that he should have devoted his great capacities to a subject which has hitherto not given the results these capacities would have produced if they had worked in a more fertile field. The discussion, I say, must be unpalatable to him at the present moment, because he, the father of preferential trade, knows better than any other man that preferential trading within the Empire is practically if not quite a corpse at the heart of the Empire.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Dead and buried.

Mr. CLARK: Any member of the Government reading in one of the morning newspapers the article upon the tariff reform muddle will see that it is recognized by their own supporters in the press that tariff reform in Britain is dead. If tariff reform in Britain is dead, there can be no preference from Britain to Canada, and certainly one of the lessons of the moment is: Do your trade upon the same common-sense principles as those under which the Mother Country trades, and you will speedily achieve a measure of greatness far exceeding that of the Mother Country herself. The attention of the House should be directed to the fact that it is recorded in very high political circles, inadvertently, no doubt, that he to whom I have referred—my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce—as the father of preferential trade, has been guilty in this case of infanticide. I do not know how much there is in the rumour, but I can assure this House, that, as I have said, it is prevalent in high political circles in Britain that the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce was not without his influence in the adoption of one of the recent policies of Bonar Law and Lord Landsdowne, to which the reply was the election which has undermined and blown to shivering atoms the whole British preferential idea. That was an inadvertent injury to Mr. Bonar Law and the laws of tariff reform, but a kick of another character was administered by my hon. friend's leader, because of all the—I do not wish to use offensive language—but of all the resemblances to the rat leaving the sinking ship, I do not think anything quite so like it was ever seen as the extreme haste with which the Prime Minister of Canada avowed to the world that he had no connection whatsoever with Mr. Bonar Law.

I have been wondering how my hon. friend has reconciled the Minister of Finance to this arrangement, because the Minister of Finance has been in this House the great exponent of the fact that trade arrangements mean loss of fiscal independence. I have heard him again and again elaborate that argument at great length. It is a new doctrine I have never heard anybody explain, if, when Cobden arranged the trade treaty between Britain and France either of those countries lost their fiscal independence. I do not think this little mouse of an arrangement with the West Indies—which is the smallest mouse that ever proceeded from so great a mountain—will undermine the independence of Canada; but the argument remains, and I have the right to ask my hon. friend the Minister of Finance to look into this matter and see whether the fiscal independence of Canada is not in danger of being lost. I do not desire to offer any opposition to the arrangement, although in some cases the tariffs are raised, and it therefore has objectionable features to a free trader. However, anything tending to extend trade is agreeable to a free trader, and I do not wish to offer any opposition to it. Neither would I offer opposition to the journey my hon. friend is likely to shortly undertake to the Antipodes. Whatever comes to him in his latter days in connection with his Imperial and political connections at the other end of the world is due to him because of the service he has given to Canada and the Empire. I have referred to the grit with which he has expounded his own ideas, but as a member of the trading firm known as Canada—and Canada is a firm and I am a member of it—I have a right to look into the doings of my chief commercial agent. The recent agent of that firm made a trade arrangement which would have led to immediate action along the common sense lines of trade, and we have a right to ask those who led this country to defeat that arrangement what they are offering to the people as an alternative to the scheme which they defeated. Well, they may say, we have this arrangement with the West Indies, and we may get one with Australia and New Zealand. I might state that last year our total trade with Australia and New Zealand, and the West Indies thrown in, amounted to \$16,000,000, and that during the same period our trade with the United States amounted to \$460,000,000. May I ask the House to consider the significance of these figures? What is the guidance they ought to give to those who are responsible for the Government and development of Canada and the expansion of her trade? This is part of a general policy, and I want to say that it is calculated to bring disappointment to those who expect an alternative which would mean something to the country. I have taken the liberty playfully and I hope not offensively, to refer to my