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tion of the Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the Empire on a matter of vital interest to the trade of this country and of the Empire. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. J. T. Hamilton (Southampton) seconded the amendment, as he thought it would be a great mistake for the Association to foster the idea in the Colonies that there would be any reversion from the principles of Free Trade to those of Fair Trade, and the amendment was far more in accord with our Free Trade principles than the original resolution. It was not for us to injure ourselves by adopting tactics which would prove to the injury of all those using them, rather was it for us to foster the idea that any steps that would tend to increase our exports to the Colonies and our imports from them would help forward their prosperity as well as that of ourselves. It would be a great mistake, at the present day, to do anything that would build up the opinion in the minds of the Colonies that we were departing from that standard of Free Trade which had done so much for the good of this country (Hear, hear).

Mr. N. Hodgson (Yeadon) thought the question raised by the resolution was a very serious one. Having long resided in the United States, he had seen a good deal of the results of the policy of Protection during the past thirty years, and he declared that if they could see the results in America they would be still more convinced in favor of Free Trade and open ports (no, no). He did not think it right to lead the Colonies to expect that we could give them more than justice. It would be against the true interests of Great Britain to depart from her present policy, inasmuch as, in spite of all opposition and competition, her commerce still retained its position. Just as the old baronial castles around that locality gave protection to the smaller districts, so had tariffs raised impediments to trade, and, just as the old castles were being removed, so were custom houses disappearing, and there would be a wider spread feeling of unity.

The President: I would suggest that Hull should consent to their resolution being dealt with now, as it raises the same question as the amendment.

Mr. B. Stiebel (Nottingham) said he would not have troubled the meeting on this question, except for the amendment moved on behalf of Swansea; but he would like to remind those present that at the Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the empire it had been distinctly declared that the colonies could not give us free trade, because they wanted tariffs to produce revenue. The question of free trade and protection should not be introduced, because, if that meeting were to enter it properly, it would keep them there three weeks instead of two days. Moreover, if they were to sanction the amendment that had been proposed it would simply be asking for something that could not be given. Some of the colonies derived their whole revenue from customs' duties, and he did not

see how he could expect them to forego this revenue to please doctrinaires in England.

M. Zossenheim (Leeds) was authorized to support the Hull motion, but was left a free hand on that of South of Scotland. It was necessary to look facts in the face, and as he had been, was, and should always be a free trader, he believed the policy we had adopted for the last thirty years was an erroneous one. When Cobden engaged us in the Treaty of Commerce with France, he said what he had got was not free trade, but something which paved the way for free trade. At that time there were heavy duties levied by England on silk, on wines and other articles coming from France, and to obtain a treaty Cobden was authorized to say that we would abolish these duties. Napoleon with all his power—greater perhaps than that of any individual at any time—would not have been able to pass that treaty without the concessions that Cobden was authorized to make. The effect of taking off those duties was to raise a party in France to fight the free trade policy of England; otherwise neither Cobden nor Napoleon would have been able to advance an inch. It was Cobden's belief that the French tariff would gradually disappear by periodical reductions, and we had made a mistake in not securing such reductions by adopting the same policy as had been adopted by Cobden for the same purpose. The golden opportunity had been lost, but we had now a government in power which, if it would take the question up properly, would secure treaties of commerce throughout the world—favoring free trade, which was not a dead letter. As a free trader, he beseeched them to listen to the voices around them, who by the present condition of things were compelled to leave the country. He reiterated that he was only authorized to support the Hull motion.

The President—That is the amendment, as presented by Mr. Burnie

Mr. Zossenheim—I could not say what the amendment is. (Loud laughter.)

The President—Practically the same as the Hull resolution.

Mr. Zossenheim, continuing, said we had carried on a policy which had not been effective through a great want of energy, and it was time now to do something that would bring about more favorable results than had so far been obtained.

Mr. R. P. Yates (Birmingham) opposed the amendment. At the present moment we were suffering under commercial depression to find the equal of which they had to go back a long time. We had the means in our hands to remedy this state of things, injurious alike to our manufacturers and artisans, and those means lay in the confederation of the British Empire for trading purposes (hear, hear). He had had opportunities in Australia, Canada and other Colonies of meeting with the business men there, and they had always been ready to extend their hands to us; but he was told that we treated our Colonies as

aliens, and did nothing to encourage them. We knew that the Colonies could not rule and govern themselves without revenues, and the only way they could get them was by taxing imported articles. The Colonies therefore said, "We ask you to give us a slight preference, and we will trade with you." At the present moment there were some 20,000 people out of employment in the shipbuilding trade, 15,000 out in Leeds and Manchester, and in the trades throughout the country there was fearful depression; the picture was a picture of misery, and as we were always ready to put our hands in our pockets for the relief of foreign suffering, we should do something for our own country, since charity should commence at home (hear, hear). The results of this commercial depression would be worse than if we were at war; thousands would be without food and raiment, thousands suffering. They could say what they liked about tariffs, but our trade was crippled. Men who had given their lives to certain businesses were going abroad and starting afresh; yet we held the whip hand of the whole world if we cared to use it! If India, Australia, Canada, and the numerous parts of our empire were confederated for trading purposes, there would be no depression of the iron trade or of our other industries. The day we got that federation we should improve socially and politically; for we might depend upon it that other nations were jealous of our supremacy, and were trying to overcome it. Great Britain had raised itself by individuality, but he believed that the time had come when the government would have to look into commercial matters more than they had done. (Hear, hear.) The opportunity now occurred for federation, but they were going to destroy it at once, by saying "we will have free trade with you."

Mr. Albert Spicer, M. P. (Newport) did not know that he should have ventured to have taken part in this discussion, but that the gentleman who preceded him referred to the experience he had gained by coming into contact with commercial men in different parts of the British empire. It only showed what different experiences were gained by mixing with different men. He (Mr. Spicer) had also mixed with commercial men in all parts of the Empire, and had formed an entirely different opinion from him. (Laughter.) He had learned that it was well to leave things as they were. (No, no.) England had grown up to its present position under her free trade system. The different requirements, the different possibilities of the various colonies forming the British Empire were so diverse that it would be actually impossible to frame a scheme which would be acceptable to all—(Hear, hear and Oh, oh)—and he could not help thinking that the seconder of the resolution—who had referred to the growth of feeling with regard to this subject of preferential tariffs—with many others, were apt to lay a good deal of stress on the commercial depression at the present time. He (Mr. Spicer) was one of those