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every self-governing part of it shall have the right to work out its own prosperity by its own methods. I do not know why it should enter the head of any statesman to deny that liberty to the United Kingdom, which, after all, is not an insignificant part of the Empire. The system under which we have lived, that system of free option for every part of the Empire, has enabled us in these islands to bear the great but the grateful burden of Empire, and in that respect, at any rate, it is surely not to be passed on one side. It has made the heart of the Empire, which is this island, the mart of the world, and it has brought about that united state of feeling which led to the remarkable outburst of loyalty during the late war—(cheers)—of which we are never weary of boasting, and rightly

boasting, but which, I think, in the course of a few weeks we shall be asked to believe was the result of some protective tariff. (Laughter.) Well, then I say that the burden of proof lies with those who would disturb the existing arrangements of the Empire, which in different directions have had their fair development and under which it has grown to the present world-wide position which it occupies.

POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL FREEDOM.

I quote you the words of the Premier of Canada, a person who has some right to be heard on the subject of political and commercial freedom:

What did Sir Wilfrid Laurier say, I think five years ago? I think he has been continuously in office ever since, and I have not heard that he has ever revoked those words. "There are parties," he said, "who hope to maintain the British Empire on lines of restricted trade. If the British Empire is to be maintained, it can only be upon the most absolute freedom, politically and commercially. (Hear hear.) In building up this great enterprise, to deviate from the principles of freedom will be so much to weaken the ties and bonds which now hold it together." I recommend that passage to the attention of the Colonial Office. (Hear, hear.) I agree, I confess, with Sir Wilfrid Laurier; nor is it from any want of thought that I have come to that conclusion, because it is not one of the recent discoveries of the Colonial Office that the Empire might be united by a bond of trade. I was a member of the old Imperial Federation League—perhaps some of you, some of the hoary-headed ones among you, have been members, too—and we worked out this subject as well as we were able, and we were always met with the absolute and insuperable difficulties which I believe will confront anybody who attempts to deal with it. My view of the policy which is really adapted to raise the strength and prosperity of this Empire is that of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Another opinion which I will quote is from a different authority not often cited at a meeting of the Liberal League—I mean The Times newspaper.

The Times' correspondent at Paris met an illustrious and anonymous gentleman—I am sure he is illustrious because he talks sound sense—and sent the following message, among others, for our consumption: "In order to strengthen the ties between the little European Island and Canada, Australia, India, and the whole Empire, what you ought to do is to make that little Island as strong and as rich as you possibly can. That is all that is needed. But do not make it poorer, less capable of an effort, less capable of defending its own, as you may thereby risk the loss of precisely what you intended to gain by the bribe of preferential tariffs. You will have been throwing away the pounds of colonial attachment, founded on respect, for the pence of colonial gratitude for the increased earnings of their exporters." (Cheers.)



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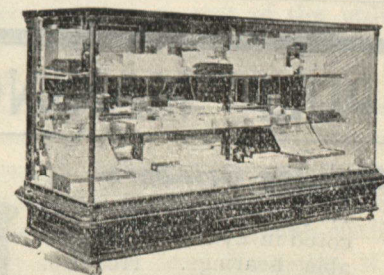
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