

course, we have simply stated our rights and asserted our honour. I see it stated in the newspapers that the German government propose to impose a prohibitive tax on Canadian imports. This surtax imposed by our government seems to have led to some earnest use of surtax on the part of Germany, and the feeling against us, I presume, is a very strong one. Well, Sir, I should say to the government and to the Minister of Finance: If the German government wishes to embark upon this course of action, meet them upon their own ground; and if they prohibit the entry of our exports of \$1,300,000, and we prohibit the entry of their exports to us of \$11,000,000, then, after trying the thing awhile, let the German financiers and economists figure out what the balance of loss or gain is on the transaction. I think we can stand it, and I feel disposed to say that we had better do it and that it is a good time to assert our own sense of propriety, our own sense of the unfair usage to which we have been subjected. I repeat the government's course in this matter meets my unqualified approbation, in fact I admire the courage which has marked the government's attitude.

Now, in listening to the remarks of the hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden, Halifax) and also in perusing the remarks of the hon. member for St. Mary's division, Montreal (Hon. Mr. Tarte), to which I had not the pleasure of listening, I find that exception is taken to the course of the government in failing, at this juncture, to enter upon a revision of the tariff, and the assertion is made that the condition of our affairs is of a character to render it proper and necessary to enter upon this revision. Now it strikes me, Mr. Speaker, on the contrary that the reasons assigned by the Finance Minister for deferring action upon the tariff, except in the few inconsiderable instances in which he has changed conditions, are good reasons. We do not know, at the present moment what the premises are upon which we shall be called upon to act. As the Finance Minister says we have the question of preferential trade not yet definitely settled. We do not know what may come of it, but the outcome must necessarily have a very material bearing upon the course which we may pursue with regard to tariff legislation. Then we have the probable re-assembling of the Joint High Commission and of negotiations with the United States relating to proposals to have enlarged trade relations between these two countries. If these negotiations are successful, of course the conditions of things will be different from what it would be if the negotiations were unsuccessful. We must necessarily predicate our tariff, to a large extent upon the outcome of the negotiations with the United States, and the relations which may be permanently settled between these two countries. For these reasons—without expressing at the moment any opinion as to

the abstract propriety of protection or free trade—I hold that it is the part of prudence to refrain, at present, from definite action until we know the terms we shall have to confront and the conditions we shall have to meet.

In regard to the British preference, my hon. friend from St. Mary's division, in his speech last night, if he is correctly reported, held that this question is already closed, that we have a clear and decisive answer from the British government. Well, this may be the case; at all events, I am quite disposed to agree with this hon. gentleman as to what will be the outcome in this question. I do not believe to-day, and I never have believed, that we could obtain from Great Britain preferential treatment in her markets to any material or tangible extent. I think that the experience that we have had with the preference we have given to Great Britain warrants us in the expectation, now, after four or five years trial, that there will be no response to that concession. And I think that when we examine into this case a little more deeply, we shall be warranted in arriving at the conclusion that Great Britain is not in a position to offer us any preference in her market under any conditions whatever. The reasons that lead me to this conclusion are based upon the scrutiny of British trade returns. These returns show the comparative insignificance of Great Britain's colonial trade as compared with her foreign trade. For instance, I find that in the year 1901, the last year for which we have the returns, the total imports into Great Britain were £531,990,000 sterling. Of this total, £416,416,000 were imports from foreign countries, or 79.73 per cent. The imports from Greater Britain, that is, from all the British colonies and dependencies, amounted to £105,573,000, or 20.27 per cent. Great Britain's total imports from Canada, according to these British returns, amounted to £19,854,000, or 3.7 per cent of the total imports. Now, when we take the exports from Great Britain, we find that the total for 1901 was £347,804,000. Of this amount, foreign countries took £234,745,000, or 67.4 per cent, while Greater Britain, that is the colonies and dependencies, took £113,118,000, or 32.06 per cent, while the Dominion of Canada took £9,250,000, or 2.6 per cent. Now, when our trade with Great Britain is so small that the imports she receives from us are only \$3.70 for every \$100 of her total imports, while, of every \$100 of British exports Canada only receives \$2.60, it strikes me as being unreasonable to suppose that England will engage in a system of discrimination in our favour against the vast bulk of her trade with foreign nations, and with the certainty that it will lead to retaliation and bad relations with those countries. I do not think, Sir, that we need expect anything of that kind. Great Britain cannot meet our wishes; such a course would be ruinous to her foreign trade and would immediately