

and have asked for it. All the more, therefore, do I contend that it was the duty of this government to redeem the pledge that they made over and over again and to prepare for the carrying out of which they have travelled over this country from end to end taking evidence, at great expense to the public. We should have met in January, and we meet in March. Yet notwithstanding this delay, we are told that the revision will not go on. It is true that an accident has befallen the Finance Minister, for which I am sorry. But then the business of this country should not rest upon the shoulders of any one man. It becomes this House to deal with the tariff, which is a matter of the greatest national importance, and which has been fairly brought before this government and this parliament and which this parliament is expected to deal with. I, for one, raise my protest against nothing being said in the King's speech on this matter which I believe would be one of the principal matters for this House to deal with. It may be personally convenient for me, or pleasant for me, to have summer holidays. But the very existence of millions of capital depends upon the action of this House; and it is the duty of parliament to protect that capital and the men whom it employs and who must labour in the summer as well as in the winter.

Now, a word as to a subject which has been mentioned here, and in which I have taken a deep interest. I am glad to see that the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. Fisher) is still in his place. He is looking at his watch, but I hope he will allow me a few minutes to take extreme exception to his statement regarding preferential trade. I have been a strong advocate of that policy for fifteen years, and I am not ashamed to declare my opinions in this House or elsewhere. I had the honour in 1903 when the Congress of the Chamber of Commerce of the Empire was assembled in Montreal, to be chosen as the Canadian leader on this question, and I had the honour to move the resolution on that occasion. There were representatives there from every important town and city in the Dominion of Canada. And, with only one exception every Canadian representative, from Victoria to Halifax, spoke and voted in favour of preferential trade with Great Britain. The Minister of Agriculture takes little account of merchants and manufacturers, it is true, but appeals to the farmers and says that the farmers have no use for preferential trade. I take issue with the minister; I know that such is not the case. The Manitoba legislature has passed a resolution in favour of this policy. The New Brunswick resolution has been mentioned. And we know that there is a feeling throughout this country from end to end in favour of mutually preferential trade.

There is no doubt the minister made a very serious mistake in his statement in Montreal. He was completely out of accord with his own cabinet—or they have misrepresented their stand not only to the people of Canada but to the people of the empire. What did they go to the colonial conference for, if not to place their views on record? And what were their views? They had given a substantial preference, and were ready to go further as soon as Great Britain would move. Was that the view of the Minister of Agriculture? If not, the cabinet misrepresented him on that occasion. I contend that the cabinet has more than once committed itself to the doctrine of preferential trade. It is true that the farmers do not want any more of what the minister calls a 'preference' because it is jug-handle preference—all on one side, and was never intended to bear the meaning that he puts upon it. He says that we have a preference now. Let the minister state wherein we have a preference. Sir, we have not one atom of preference in the British market. The products of Russia, of the United States, of every country that is most hostile to Great Britain, come in there on the same terms as those of Canada. But we know—at least I think I know—that the minister spoke his own true sentiments when he made that speech. And the 'Herald,' his own newspaper has always been—at least has been for several years past—against that policy. It attacked me most severely, and in a very unjust way, because I moved that resolution. And, from that day to this it has been against the policy of preferential trade—there is no doubt about that. The Minister of Agriculture, to-night, has let the cat out of the bag. His explanations here will not be satisfactory to this House, or to the country, or to the empire. I think the minister showed his imperialist spirit last session when he attacked the British attitude on the cattle embargo. He styled that 'an unfriendly act.' These words generally come from an ambassador who is about to break off relations with the country of which he is speaking. I do not know whether the Minister of Agriculture was speaking in that sense or not. But when the words 'an unfriendly act' are used, the next move generally involves something more violent than words.

Whether the Minister of Agriculture meant that or not, that was the impression left upon the minds of many who heard him. Now he comes up and attacks the British preference. We have long thought that this government is opposed to it. I said the first moment the preference was brought down in its present shape that it was a deadly blow at what they had been championing for years. We have been obliged to change the name, and to call it a mutual preference, in order to separate it from what