

That this conference recognizes that the principle of preferential trade between the United Kingdom and His Majesty's Dominions beyond the seas would stimulate and facilitate mutual commercial intercourse, and would, by promoting the development of the resources and industries of the several parts, strengthen the Empire.

And further on :

That the Prime Ministers of the colonies respectfully urge on His Majesty's government the expediency of granting in the United Kingdom preferential treatment to the products and manufactures of the colonies, either by exemption from or reduction of duties now or hereafter imposed.

You could not have a stronger or more express contradiction than that between the words of the Minister of Agriculture at Montreal and the words to which his colleagues unanimously gave their concurrence in the resolution which I have just quoted.

But, Sir, we have more than that. We have a separate memorandum put forth at that Colonial conference embodying not the views of all the colonies, but the views of Canada alone as expressed through her responsible ministers present at that conference. Here is the language of that memorandum :

While urging that the benefits of the preference were such as to entitle Canada to the desired exemption from the duties on food products in the United Kingdom, the Canadian ministers stated that within certain limitations they were prepared to consider the request of Mr. Chamberlain for further concessions in return for the desired preference in the markets of the United Kingdom.

And a member of that very government who put this forward as embodying the views of the Canadian government and the Canadian people, sees fit, whether with or without the mandate of his colleagues I do not know, to absolutely contradict and dissent from the words which I have just read in his presence and in the presence of this House. Further on :

The Canadian ministers stated that if they could be assured that the imperial government would accept the principle of preferential trade generally, and particularly grant to the food products of Canada in the United Kingdom exemption from duties now levied, or hereafter imposed, they, the Canadian ministers, would be prepared to go further into the subject and endeavour to give to the British manufacturer some increased advantage over his foreign competitors in the markets of Canada.

Meanwhile the Canadian ministers determined to present to the conference a resolution affirming the principle of preferential trade, and the desirability of its adoption by the colonies generally, and also expressing the opinion of the prime ministers of the colonies that His Majesty's government should reciprocate by granting preferential terms to the products of the colonies in the markets of the mother country.

Over and over again, not only in the
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resolution to which Canada was a party, but also in the separate memorandum of the Canadian ministers, was a policy set forth absolutely different from that which the Minister of Agriculture has propounded at Montreal. The memorandum went on to say :

The Canadian ministers desired to have it understood that they took this course with the strong hope and expectation that the principle of preferential trade would be more widely accepted by the colonies, and that the mother country would at an early day apply the same principle by exempting the products of the colonies from customs duties. If, after using every effort to bring about such a readjustment of the fiscal policy of the empire, the Canadian government should find that the principle of preferential trade is not acceptable to the colonies generally, or the mother country, then Canada should be free to take such action as might be deemed necessary in the presence of such conditions.

I assume under these circumstances that the Minister of Agriculture has already in his pocket a request from the Prime Minister to give up his portfolio. There can be no question as to the policy which has been pursued by the government in at least one instance, and under less aggravated circumstances. I will not quote the speech of the right hon. the First Minister, nor his letter to the Hon. Mr. Tarte in full; but I shall quote just one sentence from the Prime Minister's letter, dated Oct. 21, 1902:

To remain a member of the government, and at the same time advocate a policy which has not yet been adopted by the government, was an impediment to the proper working of our constitutional system.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if it was an impediment to the proper working of our constitutional system that Mr. Tarte should have advocated a policy which had not yet been adopted by the government, how much more is it an impediment to our constitutional system that a minister of the Crown should publicly declare himself as absolutely opposed to a policy which has been set forth in a most solemn and constitutional document, and which has since been affirmed by the First Minister?

But this is not the only instance we have had during the recess of new constitutional departures by ministers of the Crown. My hon. friend the Postmaster General found it necessary to address several public meetings in a by-election which made him member for North York. In doing so he made some rather important announcements, and was corroborated, with regard to some of these announcements, by another minister of the Crown, the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Hyman). Speaking at Newmarket on the 3rd November, 1905, as reported in the Toronto 'Globe,' the Postmaster General said, regarding certain measures passed at the close of the recent session :

But I do think there is one feature in regard to which amendment may well be looked for,