

Mr. HENDERSON. In order perhaps to give the hon. gentleman a little more reason for speaking as he did, I may say that so far as I am concerned, I am totally opposed to his plan of preferential trade, and have always been. I am not ashamed to state that; I stated it last year when this question was under discussion and I have not changed my mind since.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. What is your plan?

Mr. HENDERSON. My system of preferential trade would be one by which we would get something for what we give. I never approved, and do not expect ever to approve, of a system of preferential trade that will be all give and no get. I do not think that is the kind of preferential trade we want in Canada. The Minister (Mr. Fielding) asked the hon. member for Westmoreland (Mr. Powell) to name the rate of preference that would be satisfactory to him. The rate I name would be, the equivalent to Canada for what we give to Great Britain. I think that would be a fair rate and the only rate that can be properly named. The hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce told us some time ago that he desired to give John Bull a chance. Well, I am sure that John Bull will be very grateful indeed to Canada for the chance we propose to give him. But, Sir, we must remember that in this country we have a great many of John Bull's children who have come here to make their home and their living, and it is our duty to give them a chance just as well as to give it to their father in England. They are much more entitled to our care than is John Bull, Sr., who is much better able to take care of himself. I am much more interested in John Bull's children in this country than I am in John Bull himself in the old land, and I believe it is unfair that we should open the door for the exclusive advantage of the manufacturers of Great Britain and give them an opportunity to send their manufactured goods in here to the detriment of our own mechanics, our own artisans, and our own workmen. We must remember that every dollar's worth of goods that is sent in here from Great Britain must of necessity reduce by a corresponding amount the quantity of goods manufactured in this country; it must have a tendency to reduce the employment of labour in this country, and also to reduce the wages paid for that labour. For that reason, I again say that I am not in favour of the kind of preferential trade which the hon. gentleman (Mr. Fielding) has imposed.

Mr. WOOD (Hamilton). I am surprised to hear an Englishman talk as the hon. gentleman (Mr. Henderson) has. England has for years taken everything we had to send her without charging us a cent of duty, and now are we to say to England: You must give us 5 per cent preference over every other country or we will not

Mr. HENDERSON.

give you preferential trade with us. I am surprised that any man claiming to being not only an Englishman, but a Canadian would make such a statement as the hon. gentleman (Mr. Henderson). It has been stated on the other side of the House that as the result of this preferential tariff the merchants did not reduce their prices, and that therefore the consumers did not get any advantage because of the reduction of the duty. I may tell hon. gentlemen opposite that all the leading wholesale houses not only reduced the price of the goods imported under the 12½ per cent reduction, but they also reduced the price of the same class of goods in stock before the reduction. I am satisfied that the people of Canada have derived a very substantial benefit, and when they come to get the 25 per cent reduction on the 1st July next, the price of the stock on hand will also be reduced to that amount, so that the consuming population of this country will derive a substantial benefit from the preferential tariff.

Mr. TAYLOR. On what articles?

Mr. WOOD (Hamilton). On all articles imported from England, and that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Taylor) knows quite well. He is conversant with the fact that in buying certain English articles which he uses in his manufactory, he got the benefit of the reduced tariff even to the one-eighth, and when the reduction comes to the one-quarter, he will receive the benefit of it, not only upon the stock freshly imported, but upon the stock held on hand at that time.

Mr. POWELL. In reply to the Minister of Finance, I may say that while he does not mean to be unfair, he might as well mean it, for he has displayed unfairness in his argument. What I said was this: that this was a sham in any way we looked at it. If it did not divert trade from foreign countries to Great Britain, it was a delusion so far as the British exporter was concerned, and if it did, it was a sham so far as the Canadian taxpayer was concerned. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Fielding) asks me, what amount of reduction I would have? I would have no reduction without there was a quid pro quo. That is what we understand on this side of the House by a preferential tariff. If there is a quid pro quo, then I am prepared to make a reduction, but not otherwise.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I am quite satisfied with that explanation.

Mr. McDOUGALL. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) told us that the consumer got the benefit of the rebate in duty that was given to the importer, and that statement was backed up by the hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. Wood). It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that every man in this House ought to know, that it is not