

doctrine of free trade and accept medals at the hands of a free trade club, and place himself in direct antagonism to public thought and discussion upon such an important question, then I say this country will yet rue the day when the Prime Minister attended those Jubilee proceedings and sacrificed the best interests of the country he represented.

Hon. Mr. McCALLUM—Hear, hear,

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—I should like to ask the hon. gentleman what his position is; if Great Britain was to tax the food and the raw material required by the people of Great Britain, whether they would not become poorer and less able to buy our products.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I regret I have not time on this present occasion to go into the subject in so exhaustive a way as would be satisfactory to my hon. friend, because that would necessitate a discussion of the entire problem. But what I do wish to say is that I do not for one moment consider myself bound to any of the particular schemes submitted upon this important question from time to time, or I do say that I am an adherent of any of the particular plans which have been advocated in any of those conferences. I, however, do say that there is a general principle running through the whole of those discussions which must of necessity appeal to the people of Canada, and we are nothing short of blind to our interests and absolutely ignorant of the destiny that awaits us if we absolutely refuse to consider the proposals which from time to time are made in this direction. During the presence of the premier in London this same subject was discussed. We find in the Imperial blue book that upon that occasion at a meeting of the premiers Mr. Chamberlain spoke as follows:

I pass on to another question, and that is as to the future commercial relations between this country and her colonies.

How far is it possible to make those relations closer and more intimate?

I have said that I believe in sentiment as the greatest of all the forces of the general government of the world, but at the same time I should like to bring to the reinforcement of sentiment the motives which are derived from material and personal interest.

But undoubtedly the fiscal arrangements of the different colonies differ so much among themselves, and all differ so much from those of the mother country, that it would be a matter of the greatest complication and difficulty to arrive at any conclusion which would unite us commercially in the same sense in which the Zollverein united the empire of Germany.

It may be borne in mind that the history of that Zollverein is most interesting and most instructive.

It commenced entirely as a commercial convention, dealing in the first place only partially with the trade of the empire, it was rapidly extended to include the whole empire; and it finally made possible, and encouraged, the ultimate union of the empire.

But this is a matter upon which at the present time, rather than suggest any proposals of my own, I desire to hear the views of the gentlemen present.

Here was a representative of the Imperial government laying before the colonial premiers a proposal or rather suggesting that they should enter into a discussion of the best method to adopt by which commercial relations of an inter-imperial character should be established between Great Britain and her colonies, and we find the premier of this Dominion absolutely setting his foot down upon the project and refusing to discuss it. We find him leaguering himself with the Cobden Club and accepting at their hands a badge of their order which at once established him to be one of their leading champions. We find upon that occasion a speech made by the president of the Cobden Club in presenting him with this celebrated medal and a response made by the premier of his faithful allegiance to Cobdenism, and this just at a time when the eyes of Canada were upon the premier, when our ears were open to hear what would be said by him in regard to his promoting preferential trade which in June, 1896, he so strongly advocated without reserve in the city of London, Ontario, immediately previous to the June election. Let me read you for a moment part of the speech which he then made, and let us consider how it is possible for a gentleman occupying the high and important position which he does to-day and which he did at that time to reconcile the position which he took in June, 1896, in London, Ontario, and the position which he took in that greater London the commercial metropolis of the world, the capital of the empire to which we belong. His speech in London, Ontario, in July is as follows:

Now the statesmen of Great Britain have thought that the governments of the colonies have come to a time when a new step can be taken in their development.

What is that?

That there shall be a commercial agreement between England and the colonies.

That practical statesman—Mr. Joseph Chamberlain—(applause)—has come to the conclusion that the time has come when it is possible to have within the bounds of the empire a new step taken, which will give to the colonies in England a preference for their products over the products of other nations.