

But of course the whole difficulty can be avoided, I only point out in passing—the whole difficulty can be avoided by any colony which desires to make the preferential arrangement with the mother country, if that colony will confine its offer *nominatim* to the mother country and not make it to a foreign country, but if it is offered to a foreign country then as I say it will be controlled by the most favoured-nation treaties throughout the world.

I gathered from the speech of the hon. Secretary of State the other day that the intention of the government was to act upon that suggestion, and that the preferential clause of the tariff would be modified in accordance with the suggestion of the Colonial Secretary.

Hon. Mr. ALMON—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. POWER—Then, when the premiers of the various colonies met to consider the speech made to them by the Secretary of State for the Colonies :

The commercial relations of the United Kingdom and the self-governing colonies were first considered and the following resolutions were unanimously adopted :—

1. That the premiers of the self-governing colonies unanimously recommend the denunciation at the earliest convenient time of any treaties which now hamper the commercial relations between Great Britain and her colonies.

2. That in the hope of improving the trade relations between the mother country and her colonies the premiers present undertake to confer with their colleagues with a view to seeing whether such a result can be properly secured by a preference given by the colonies to the products of the United Kingdom.

I think it is quite clear that the denunciation of the treaties is due to the action taken by the parliament of Canada last session in connection with the preferential clause of the tariff; and, apart altogether from the effect which this provision in the tariff has had upon the action of the Imperial Government, the reduction of twenty-five per cent in the tariff upon goods which come from England and from certain colonies, is a matter of very considerable consequence. It is a step in the direction of a revenue tariff.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—Was not that only done to equalize the duties between the United States and Great Britain, rather than to give a preference to British goods?

Hon. Mr. POWER—No; the provision is that upon goods imported from Great Britain—I speak now of what it will be after the 1st of July next—there is a reduction of twenty-five per cent upon the regular tariff. That is as clear and distinct and marked a preference as one can well have.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—Hon. gentlemen will recollect that the Minister of Marine and Fisheries claimed that the duties levied against the importation of English goods were 25 per cent more than those levied against United States goods, and thus the change equalizes the two. It is not abolishing the tariff or anything of that kind: it is equalizing what was supposed to be an inequality before.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I do not remember that the Minister of Marine and Fisheries made the statement that the hon. gentleman has referred to.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—He moved a resolution in the House.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I know that some years ago the hon. gentleman who is now Minister of Marine and Fisheries made a speech in the House of Commons in which he showed that the tariff of the conservative government was so arranged that goods which were imported from Great Britain did pay, on an average, a higher duty than those imported from the United States; and the change which took place last year is calculated to remedy that evil, as a matter of justice to the mother country. Where England and the United States are, for instance, competing for our markets, say for woollen goods or cotton goods, it gives the English article a preference of 25 per cent in our market, which I think is a very important matter indeed, and the fact that no reduction is made in favour of countries outside the empire which maintain hostile tariffs against the empire and against us, is not a very serious objection. I for one should perhaps have been gratified if further steps had been taken in the direction of a revenue tariff or of free trade; but looking at the spirit in which Canada has been dealt with by foreign countries, particularly by the great country south of us, I am not disposed to regret that no steps have been taken to materially lower the wall upon our side.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—So that you will keep up protection?

Hon. Mr. POWER—We cannot have free trade at once. We have made a very considerable step in the direction of a revenue tariff, and I think we have made it the right way. We have made it so that it benefits