

not get it over twenty-five years ago? Why was it that in the last statement made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier he made perfectly clear what would happen if they could not get what they wanted? These are the words he used:

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.

And the speeches were in the same sense, and nothing came of it. To-day we have a chancellor of the exchequer in Great Britain delivering a speech in which he says this conference will meet at Ottawa, and "we are committed to the principle of empire preference." Of course, one does not expect in the very nature of things that hon. gentlemen opposite, any of them, would admit that this government in any sense contributed to that end. But there are those who live not in Canada but in England, who will say that the action taken by this administration was a powerful factor in bringing about that end. That we can afford to leave to posterity, and to those who know the facts, I shall not do more than point out what some at least have been fair enough to realize, that the steady and consistent attitude we have taken with respect to empire preference has brought about the end that for so long Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal party endeavoured to accomplish.

Further, why is it that to-night the right hon. gentleman has changed his tune? What about his speech in Winnipeg? What about his regard for the empire during the election campaign? Do hon. members recall that in 1930 during the election campaign he was going to and fro taking a very generous attitude towards the empire; that he was then the Simon pure defender of the empire? He and his party and they only were prepared to do what was right, fair and just by the empire. In fact, in one place, namely Barrie, he became so violently patriotic that he put Great Britain before Canada. But that was in a moment of emotional and temporary enthusiasm, because later that sentiment resolved itself into something more solid. Listen to what he said at Winnipeg the other night. I wonder if you realize the position he then took. He told them we were not going to have any "narrow economic imperialism," as he called it. His words are:

We cannot be content with any restricted interpretation of our nationality either in the constitutional or the economic sense. We are

opposed to a narrow economic imperialism for the same reason that we are opposed to a narrow economic nationalism.

That was to arouse sentiments of anti-imperialism in the community in which he spoke. Everyone who has read the Hansard debates is thoroughly familiar with the principle upon which our ideas of preference were based. We have followed consistently the policies of Macdonald and Tupper, policies of mutual preference for mutual advantage. Unless there is mutual advantage there can be no preference, for preference must be mutual or it is not advantage at all. That is the position we have consistently taken, and that is the position which Mr. Chamberlain took, speaking in the House of Commons the other day with respect to Canada, when he said:

I come now to the position of the empire countries in connection with this change in our fiscal system. The committee is aware that next July the Imperial conference is to be held in Ottawa where the economic relations of the members of the British Commonwealth will be discussed. His Majesty's government attaches the utmost importance to that conference, and they intend to approach it with a full determination of promoting arrangements which will lead to a great increase of inter-imperial trade. Now I have no doubt that the dominions would no more question our right to impose duties in our own interest for the object either of raising revenue or of restricting imports than we have questioned theirs to do the same.

Observe those words,—*"restricting imports."* While the right hon. gentleman was talking in Halifax about this government restricting trade, the British government was rushing through the House of Commons a fifty per cent import duty measure. Mr. Chamberlain proceeded:

But considerations of that kind have to be weighed against advantages to be obtained by preferential entry into dominion markets, even though they should involve some surrender of revenue or some lessening reduction of imports; and since, until we meet the dominion representatives, we shall not be in a position to estimate the advantages or disadvantages on either side, and since we desire to mark at every stage our wishes to approach this conference in true spirit of imperial unity and harmony, we have decided so far as the dominions are concerned (and in this arrangement we shall include India and Southern Rhodesia also) neither the general nor the additional duties shall become operative before the Ottawa conference has been concluded.

That is in accordance with the principles for which we have contended now for nearly half a century. The fact that Great Britain has departed from the fiscal principles that governed her policies in days gone by is in itself an indication that that great people realize a tariff still is but an instrument.