

some of the services to the cause of free trade which have earned him the gold medal of the Cobden Society, the plaudits of English free traders and the profound admiration of "right-thinking" free traders throughout the world.

But the Canadian tariff is not, as no doubt our foreign trade friends would, with their usual ingenuity, like to attempt to represent, a tariff framed in the interests of the greedy manufacturer. It is designed for the benefit of the people. Whenever the Governor in Council has reason to believe that with regard to any article of commerce there exists a ring among manufacturers or dealers to unduly enhance the price of such articles has (the Governor in Council) may empower any judge of the Supreme Court to make summary inquiry and report whether such combination or ring exists.

If the judge reports in the affirmative, and, "if it appears to the Governor in Council that such disadvantage to the consumers is facilitated by the duties of customs imposed on a like article when imported, then the Governor in Council shall place such article on the free list, or so reduce the duty on it as to give to the public the benefit of reasonable competition in such article." It is unnecessary to add that this provision gives the death-blow to selfish combinations, not only of manufacturers, but of retailers, and conclusively shows that the tariff is designed to foster local industries, not at the cost of the consumer, but at that of the employers of cheap labour in Europe and the Orient. Our free trade apologists have, therefore, a great deal to explain away in connection with Canadian trade and commerce and Canada's fiscal system. They must first explain away the tariff; next they must show how this most drastic description of tariff has injured or will injure Canadian manufacturers, or the Canadian consumer, and if they cannot do this, and they cannot with truth, it will be necessary for them to demonstrate how a very much lighter tariff can, with provisos similar to those of the Dominion, which we have quoted, injure either the manufacturers or the consumers of this province. Finally they may feel it incumbent upon them to explain how Sir Wilfrid Laurier, with his own inflexible fiscal policy, staring him in the face, could by any stretch of truth or of imagination, even, style himself, when in England, a free trader. For our part, we are free to confess that the practice of the Canadian premier seems to be infinitely better and more honest than his precept. At the same time perfect honesty of profession, combined with protection, would never have procured him the gold medal of that eccentric organization, the Cobden Club. We hope, however, that after this exposure we shall hear no more nonsense about Canada being a free trade country, and that no further attempts in this direction will be made to deceive the people of New South Wales.

Now, let us look at the premier's conduct when he came back to Canada. His first speech on his return was made in Montreal. In it he assured the manufacturers in as plain language as he could use, that their industries would not be destroyed, that they would adopt, as far as possible, a permanency of tariff, and in adopting a permanency of tariff the protective principle, upon the lines that had been suggested by Sir John Thompson, which they have adopted, would be carried out. Then, he found that there was a strong sentiment of disapproval of his utterances in England, particularly

when he declared that they did not want any preference, though they had professed it by their tariff. When he got to Toronto he made the astounding statement that he had to adopt that principle of diplomacy in order to obtain the denunciation of the German and Belgium treaties; or, in other words, he had to swallow at one gulp, all his professions to the people of Canada the moment he set foot upon English soil. In order to what?—to humbug the people of England and lead them to believe that they would adopt every principle which they had professed in regard to the fiscal policy of the country by adopting free trade; and when the olive branch was held out by the Duke of Devonshire (one of the most important Liberals in England, of a family of Whigs and Liberals of a whole life time—now it is true joined with Lord Salisbury, more particularly on account of the Home Rule question) and still further by Mr. Chamberlain—that was rejected by Sir Wilfrid Laurier on the part of Canada, and that, too, in the face of the professions that he had made during the last eight or ten years. Well, he says, I could not obtain the denunciation of these treaties unless I had taken that course. Why, it seems to me a diplomat would have held his tongue! There was no necessity for his rejecting a proposition, however remote it may have been, however indefinite it may have been, the moment he set his foot on the shores of England. All that was necessary for him to do, when the intimation was given that England was prepared to adopt a more liberal policy, and to give something in return for the opening of our markets to their manufacturers, was certainly to have either thanked them for it, or given such an answer as would have left it open for the future, when the conference met, to discuss the question.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—What proposition am I to understand the Duke of Devonshire made?

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I did not say a proposition was made, I said the olive branch was held out by the Duke of Devonshire that a preferential trade with England could be adopted.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—On what basis? It makes a great difference.