

You ask for no preferential treatment, you make yourselves as large a step in the direction of free trade as your present circumstances will permit, and you desire to treat the rest of the world as you are now treating us.

What does my right hon. friend think of that? Does he not see at once that the medal which decorates the right hon. leader of the Government and which he seems to value so highly, is a barrier—complete barrier, so far as he is concerned—to the carrying out of the pledge he gave the people of Sheffield. That pledge was that Canada would honourably carry out—and I trust that the promise will be redeemed even if this medal would have to be surrendered—the preference he had avowed on the floor of Parliament and in face of the world that he was desirous of giving to England, and England alone, for the First Minister declared that England was the only country that was going to benefit from the preferential treatment. I say, Mr. Speaker, that Canada would be humiliated to the last degree if, under these circumstances, we would hesitate, when these treaties are denounced, in carrying out the pledge given by the Minister of Finance to pass an Act, under which that preference could be given to England and England alone. As I have said before, it is a very serious matter for the right hon. the First Minister. The medal must go. My right hon. friend, instead of drawing back on that occasion and explaining that there had been a misapprehension, when these vital terms, so far as the interests of Canada are concerned, were stated to him, spoke as follows:—

Canada has adopted freedom of trade, I hope and believe, as her guiding star. Other countries may follow, and probably we may expect that all countries issued from England will one after another follow her example. I was a free trader before I came to England, I am still more a free trader after seeing what free trade has done in England.

Nothing could be more conclusive. The contract was sealed and signed. The president delivered the medal and pinned it to the breast of my right hon. friend, and therefore it is impossible that any step can be taken by him for preferential trade with Great Britain except on terms which will compel him in honour to return that medal. Having received it under false pretences, he is obliged in honour to return it, and the sooner he does so, the better, in my opinion, it will be for him. I believe it is made of gold, but whatever the metal may be of which it is composed, that hon. gentleman will find that that medal will be a millstone around his neck and will drag him down to destruction in the presence of the free and enlightened electorate, if he continues to wear it on the terms on which he has received it. I cannot conceive a more unfortunate position for Canada to occupy than that of having the right hon. gentleman, after all this shower of decorations,

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turn around and say: Well, we did not intend it after all. We simply humbugged you and gained our object in the meantime, but have no intention of carrying out what we proposed.

Now, I have drawn the attention of the House to what this preferential trade amounted to last year. There was the striking fact that instead of having done anything for England, this mighty boom, for the giving of which the hon. gentleman was held up as a saviour of his country, when on the other side of the Atlantic, had the effect of reducing the exports of Great Britain to Canada to the lowest point they have reached since confederation. Suppose the people of England had known that at the end of the year, British exports to Canada would have been reduced by three and a half million dollars, they could have concluded that no people would have been so insulted and misled by the statements of any public man. Here is a striking article that came from London on the 21st of September, when the people over there began to get their eyes opened and to find out that their trade was decreasing instead of increasing. The able and diligent secretary of the London Chamber of Commerce issued a circular in which he said:

The expectations of the free traders have undoubtedly been disappointed by the extension, to practically all countries except the United States, of what was supposed to be an exclusive British preference.

The English people thought, in the innocence of their souls, that when the First Minister of Canada stood up in Parliament and declared that under that clause no country except Great Britain could enjoy the benefit of it his statement was correct, but they found out how little dependence could be put on it.

This has tended to check the expected diversion into purely British channels of trade now done through Britain with France, Germany, etc.

Another retarding influence is the absence of exact official information as to the intentions of Canada after August next. Will the preference then be exclusively British?

They had not then seen, I suppose, the speech of my hon. friend at Sheffield.

The great difficulty is the lack of exact official information as to the intentions of Canada.

That is the question which the hon. gentleman has got to answer, and the answer to that question involves the character of the Government of Canada, it involves the confidence of the British people in the word of a Canadian Minister.

I pass on now to the denunciation of the treaties. On the other side of the Atlantic the right hon. the First Minister held up this preference everywhere as a mighty boon. He told the people there of the population of Canada, of its enormous resources, of its great wealth, and he stated how delighted the people of Canada were, without any quid pro quo, refusing to ask