

Mr. Dunning, with that fine speech, with a new reduction in the tariff as affecting the importation of British goods, a greater preference, and with those fine declarations about no petty spirit of bargaining. Well, perhaps after thirty-two years some relief might have come to the farmers of the west to the extent of a few pence more for their wheat on the British market—provided that, in the interval, means had been found of raising the price of wheat grown in other parts of the world.

Because Mr. Speaker—and this is one of the reasons for which, in spite of many misdeeds which I have denounced in the policy of the British government, I remain, and am still more every day, a deep admirer of the nation—the British people, while thinking of the conditions prevailing throughout the world, and while being prepared to bargain fairly with all nations including their associates within the empire, think of themselves first, second and last and put themselves on a fair basis to bargain. What means all this talk about bargaining, that there should be no such thing as bargaining? Sheer nonsense! Who is that great English or French jurist who said that after all every question of right—right generally, mind you—the greatest thing on earth in the government of nations and the maintenance of order as among men and peoples—every question of right could be brought within the four corners of the law of contract, properly understood and interpreted. Likewise every diplomatic question, every matter at issue between governments and nations must of necessity be a matter of bargaining. The only question is, will you bargain fairly, honestly and with statesmanship, or will you bargain as a miser? Napoleon once called the English nation a nation of shopkeepers; but, as Lord Rosebery, his great admirer, said in later years, the English made a great mistake in being so angry at that qualification of Napoleon's. What has made their greatness? Not their soldiers, not their sailors, not even their statesmen, but their shopkeepers, their merchants and their industrialists, because, while having constant regard to their corporate or individual interests, they never lost sight of their duty to their people and to their nation. Canada, Australia and other parts of the British empire will be in a position to deal with Britain on a footing of equality—not of legal equality, that is nothing—but on a footing of moral, social and economic equality, to strike a fair, honest and proper bargain with the British nation, when they have learned, first, to stand on their own ground, to realize their real interests, and then confront their

position with that of the British government. So long as we go on—I was going to say, waving the British flag, but that is not the proper expression—so long as one party goes on making a bed cover of the British flag in order to prevent the people from looking under the cover, and the other party makes use of it as a pocket handkerchief to wipe its nose every time it has a cold in its head, so long as we make such silly use of the British flag instead of adopting for our own use what is best in British traditions, we will not be in a position to make a fair bargain with the British government or, at that, with any other nation or government.

I consider, and I make this statement quite deliberately, that the position taken by the Prime Minister at the opening of the conference was the proper one to take. But what happened? The Prime Minister lost sight of a few things, as my right hon. friend has lost sight of a few other things. The Prime Minister is quite right when he says that he practically imitated the example set by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1902; but so far he has not gone the length of following the example set by Sir John Macdonald when accused by his Liberal opponents, in one of their first fits of feigned loyalty, of endangering British connection by the adoption of his national policy. He said: "All I have to reply is, so much the worse for the British connection. I am not adopting that policy to oppose British interests, I am adopting it to serve Canadian interests. I hope the British people will find a way to accommodate themselves to it, but anyway it is my policy." The right hon. leader of the opposition read quite properly an extract from a letter from another robust Canadian, Sir Alexander Galt, on the right of Canada to exercise her fiscal autonomy. He might have read also the letters exchanged between the government of Sandfield Macdonald and the same Duke of Newcastle, to the effect that Canada intended to keep her own sons upon her own territory and not to lend them to any government in London in order to advance British interests. Both parties could obtain valuable lessons from those old records. The incidentals of the national policy of 1878 might have been wrong and the assumption that protection was a cure for all evils might be erroneous. I did not believe so, years ago, when I was elected. Strange to say I was elected as a protectionist Liberal. I could not see my way clear to professing free trade in my county and voting protection in the house. After I had secured a mandate from the people I could not bring myself to present one phase of the situation to the people and another phase to the house.