

ways Sir Wilfrid's opinion, in view of his speeches in 1896, I cannot possibly conceive.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—He would look at it as everybody else would and say it was unattainable.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—Why did he speak of the immense possibilities, of the advantage that Canadians were to get from the free admission of their beef, grain, butter, and all the other products of our country into the market of Great Britain, while the products of other countries were to be met with duties, if all the while he thought it was impossible to get a preference in Great Britain in favour of the products of Canada? I will not follow that subject any further. I think my hon. friend will do well to pass it over as quietly as he can, because the course of his government in regard to it is of such a nature that if there is any good in the British preference they cannot claim any credit for it, because they did not intend to give a sole preference but reciprocity to any country that would reciprocate. They narrowed it down after they went to England to a British preference, and even if it had done all the good that my hon. friend says it has done, they would be entitled to no more credit than anybody who makes a lucky blunder.

Hon. Mr. WOOD (Hamilton)—Did not one of the hon. gentleman's colleagues from Prince Edward Island move a resolution in the House of Commons long before the time he refers to, offering preferential trade to England?

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—One of whose colleagues?

Hon. Mr. WOOD (Hamilton)—I refer to the present Judge Davies. He moved a resolution in the House of Commons offering to give a preference to England, and the Conservative party voted it down.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—My hon. friend, I am afraid, is nearly as much out in his history as his leader is.

Hon. Mr. WOOD (Hamilton)—I know that is a fact.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—My hon. friend knows that a resolution was proposed, but he is not very accurate in stating the terms of that resolution. It was simply

a bald resolution in favour of closer trade with England. It was just about the same time that the same gentleman and those associated with him were trying to pass resolutions in favour of commercial union with the United States. The ground taken is, that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, before going to England, posed as an advocate of a preferential tariff in favour of Canada. There is nothing in what my hon. friend from Hamilton says to contradict that; it rather confirms it. The premier posed before the people of Canada as an advocate of preferential trade with England, not a one-sided preferential tariff, for he explained the advantage would be immense, because it meant that practically all our agricultural products would be received in England free of duty, while the products of foreign countries would be met with a tariff. He made that statement and there is nothing inconsistent with the views I have attributed to Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the statement made by the hon. gentleman with reference to the resolution of Judge Davies in the House before 1896.

Hon. Mr. WOOD (Hamilton)—The hon. gentleman says they blundered into this, although it had been thought of and carefully discussed in the House of Commons. The hon. gentleman says it was a blunder in giving the preference?

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—My hon. friend will not help the position of his friends at all by probing this question any further as he is doing. He brings Sir Louis Davies' resolution up to controvert my view that the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier blundered into this preferential tariff which they have now with England. There is nothing in that resolution which does not show that they were even blundering at that time, for it appears, if my hon. friend is right, that they contemplated a preferential tariff with England such as we have now. If so, they made a very serious blunder in 1897 when they introduced their reciprocal tariff which they declared over and over again, through the mouth of their finance minister, was not a preferential tariff at all. Therefore, if there is any point in my hon. friend's interruption it is to prove that they blundered when they introduced that resolution or blundered when they passed their so-called reciprocal tariff in 1897, or that they