

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : Yes, about one-fifth.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Of the British imports to New Zealand, yes. If you applied the same system, and gave us 20 per cent. of the total articles imported into England, we should say it was a good thing.

Ninth Day.
1 May 1907.

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PREFERENTIAL
TRADE.

Mr. ASQUITH : I am not complaining at all; but I was only pointing out what the dimensions of the preference are in answer to Sir William Lyne's question.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : From our point of view what we have already done shows an earnest desire for preference to be given to the old land. Whether we are right in that or otherwise must be left to others than myself to judge. We believe that it is a good thing, and are quite prepared to extend it. As far as New Zealand is concerned we are only too ready to enter into a reciprocal treaty with our friends of Australia to which Mr. Deakin has referred. We have also an adjustment of the Customs Tariff to put on the Statute Book next session, and we are most anxious to bring about improved trade relationships between the Colonies, and most anxious to assist in the development of trade between the old world and the newer one. Apart from feelings of sentiment which are so valuable, we have an additional desire to build up our country by reciprocal treatment, which will strongly develop trade between ourselves.

Dr. JAMESON : Lord Elgin and gentlemen, I shall be brief, indeed. After the able and full speeches of Mr. Deakin and Sir Joseph Ward the ground seems to be pretty well covered. At the same time, as Sir Joseph Ward has said, this is an extremely important subject, I might almost say vital, if you look to the future of our Colonies and of the Empire generally. Therefore I do not think the representative of any Colony would be justified in not saying a few words in support of the proposition now before the Conference.

As regards the Cape, which I represent, I think it is peculiarly fitting that its representative should speak. Though economically, certainly, we are far behind the representatives of the Colonies who have already spoken, yet in the inception of this idea of preference, I think our statesmen were quite in the front. We have had two great statesmen—somebody said the only two men we have ever produced to whom you could legitimately apply the word "statesmen"—Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Hofmeyr. Mr. Rhodes as far back as 1890, I remember, immediately he took office, wrote to the then Prime Ministers of Canada and Australia, putting before them this proposition of preference to the goods of the Mother Country. Again, when the Chartered Company was established in Rhodesia, Mr. Rhodes insisted, and with great difficulty carried his point, that there should be a clause put in the Order in Council establishing it that no British goods entering Rhodesia should ever be charged more duty than the then Cape Tariff, which was 9 per cent. at that time. That has been carried out, of course, ever since. The Customs Tariff of the South African Customs Union is 12 per cent., but because of that clause introduced by Mr. Rhodes we have to allow Rhodesia only to charge 9 per cent., 3 per cent. less than the Cape. Then Mr. Hofmeyr, as Mr. Deakin has quoted already, in 1887 brought this forward, returning to it again in 1894, at Ottawa, and certainly, with regard to that objection to preference that it might include bargaining, and might also lead to strained relations between the Mother Country and the various Colonies, as brought forward by Mr. Hofmeyr, there was no question that that would be done, not as a question of any advantage to the Colony itself, but