

Ninth Day.
1 May 1907.
—
PREFERENTIAL
TRADE.
(Dr. Jameson.)

four dependencies. I may say when we were discussing in this room the question of a secretariat the other day, I had in my mind that if we got some very small concession which I am still hopeful of from Mr. Asquith, one of the first uses of that secretariat would be to sit down and go into the tariff question of the United Kingdom and the Colonies. That was partly the reason at that time I was very insistent that the secretariat if possible should be composed of people conversant with the various Colonies and who would understand the tariffs. The last objection was that any such idea of preference would interfere with the natural channels of trade. I have a different idea of what the natural channels of trade should be from what Lord Ripon intended on that occasion. That really meant the most profitable channels of trade; but in the last few years many words have changed their significance, and I hope we have come to consider as the natural channels of trade those channels where our kith and kin are rather than the foreigner.

I think that shows there has been considerable change in governmental opinion in the last 14 or 15 years. Then in a much more recent period I think we get a good deal of hope of a change of opinion even amongst the present Government. We were all very pleased to see Mr. Lloyd George's Bill the other day in connection with shipping, to make sure that the foreigner should not have any greater advantages with regard to sanitary arrangements and load line, and so on. That is all in the direction of helping British shipping against the foreigner.

Then, in a recent speech of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, at the West Australian dinner, I think it was, I noticed Mr. Winston Churchill said it is a very easy thing for two tariff states to make arrangements one against the other, but it is an infinitely easier thing for two tariff states to make an arrangement to help each other. I do not see why with the several Colonies with a tariff it should not be an infinitely easy thing for them to make an arrangement with self-governing Colonies. As to the idea that the Government is pledged not to give any preference to the Colonies which it does not give to the rest of the world, I wonder if the Government remembers at the present moment that the British Government—as represented by those two small protectorates, Basutoland and Bechuanaland—is giving preference to these Colonies that we have made treaties with which it does not give to foreign nations. It is actually giving preference at the present moment, not at our request, but at the request of the Imperial Government, to Bechuanaland and Basutoland, which are entirely under the control of the Imperial Government. At the request of the Imperial Government they were included in our South African Customs Union, which gives a preference to Great Britain and the other self-governing Colonies.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : When was that ?

Dr. JAMESON : At the last Customs Convention a year and a half ago, at Maritzburg, and in the one before also. I have only been three weeks in England, but I have received from various associations throughout England I believe a little over 700 resolutions in favour of tariff reform.

Mr. DEAKIN : I have had hundreds.

Dr. JAMESON : I had them counted the day before yesterday, and it was 680 then.

Mr. ASQUITH : Where from ?