

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

Sir Joseph Ward says sympathetically just now, in South Africa. We do expect to be federated. We do expect to have other things to export besides the few articles that we now export. I will name presently the exports. Even without federation, at the present moment I have been making arrangements, while I have been in England, for a very large amount of maize to be brought over to this country where we can get a market. For us it is a very large amount. I was making arrangements for 80,000 tons for one season from a portion of Cape Colony to come here. In the future we do expect greatly to benefit from a preference which now is only benefiting the larger producers.

Mr. ASQUITH: I do not want to interrupt your argument, but perhaps you will tell us presently what the things are you export.

Dr. JAMESON: My argument was simply to try and influence the Government as much as I could. As Sir Joseph Ward said, we have three Ministers of the British Government here, and I am trying to impress upon them as far as I possibly can that we are asking and pressing all we can to get something from them, and as a kind of inducement I was saying that opinion is changing a little and we hope they will change a little bit further forward in the next two days; and then it will give us a beginning on this preferential question.

With regard to South Africa, we certainly cannot get much benefit at the present moment. There are some things we can get benefit from. The two main things are wine and tobacco. You say that is so small it does not matter, but take the wine alone; supposing we return to the old conditions before 1862, it would be a very great benefit to South Africa. In 1862 the United Kingdom were establishing Free Trade, and at the same time wanted a market for their goods, and so they reduced the tariff on French wines to the level of the Cape wines. The French wines were better then. I do not think they are now. We think we are going to produce as good wines.

Mr. ASQUITH: You are going to.

Dr. JAMESON: I think we do now, but we are going to do better. At that time the tariff came down. For a little Colony like the Cape at that time, 50 years ago, to get 130,000*l.* a year for its wine was a very considerable item, but it came down to 2*s.* 9*d.* on French wines, which was the duty on Cape wine at the time, and in a few years it was down to 80,000*l.*; at present it is nothing at all. We have developed enormously since that, and are producing infinitely better wine, and if we get a preference on Cape wine it would give an enormous impetus to one of our most important interests in Cape Colony. I may say, when I came into office at the Cape, I sent a long and elaborate memorandum to the then Government, and they gave me the usual sympathy, but they gave me nothing else. We know Governments are not all the same, and we still hope that because the former Government refused it that is no reason why the present Government should, and we may get something.

Mr. ASQUITH: Do you know any British Government which gives a preference to any form of alcohol?

Mr. DEAKIN: We give it to South Africa.

Mr. ASQUITH: I do not know about that. Sir Wilfrid Laurier does not, Australia is not supposed to, and South Africa does not, so this is an entirely new departure in preference referring to alcohol.