

what we have attempted since we came here. We came here primarily to deal with this question. It is not the last, the laggard question, of the Conference in our estimation, nor is it so in the estimation of our people. It is the primary reason, if I may so term it, for our being here to-day.

Speaking from the standpoint of an Australian who has never before been out of Australia, I do not come here, and I think my Prime Minister does not come here, to plead in an abject way for anything. We do not come here to filch anything. We do not come here with a view to place the British consumer in a worse position than he has been in. But, speaking as a representative of the greatest, though most distant part of the Empire, I desire clearly to lay before you matters which seem to me to be of great moment to the Empire, and I do not speak with any wish of derogation from that great country Canada; if, however, Sir Wilfrid Laurier will look up statistics, he will find that the export trade of Australia last year was nearly 14,000,000*l.* more than Canada, and the total trade of Australia I think, from memory, is nearly 5,000,000*l.* more than that of Canada; this when we have hardly commenced, as I say, to develop our country.

Tenth Day.
2 May 1907.

PREFERENTIAL
TRADE.

(Sir W. Lyne.)

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: What was the total trade of Australia?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE: Last year exports approaching 70,000,000*l.*, and about 46,000,000*l.* imports. I think it is between 4,000,000*l.* and 5,000,000*l.* more than Canada. During my lifetime in the southern hemisphere I have seen changes occur of startling moment to the Empire, and I feel it my duty to speak to this Conference, and try to give them some idea of these changes which have and are now even to a greater extent taking place so far as we are concerned. The changes I refer to are hard solid facts—to which we in our distant country cannot close our eyes. They are gradually sucking away the trade—and I say this advisedly—and with it the employment and life's blood of the people of the Mother Country, and I also say that because the trade would be here were it not being forced to foreign countries, and the employment, too, would be here. I feel that these changes are attacking the very heart of the Empire, and I want it to be understood with your permission, that I am a strong Britisher. Why? Because my father came from Britain, and because my grandfather came from Britain, but as each new generation comes it has been presented to me very vividly that you want something more than that to keep up the interest that hitherto has been held by our forefathers, and ourselves in Great Britain, and nothing will do that so well as closer unity in commerce. That is one thing that I am very anxious for. I see the younger generation callous to some extent, thoroughly loyal in a sense but callous. That is not so with the original stock, who were imbued with the feelings of their fathers and grandfathers in regard to Great Britain. This has impressed us very keenly. We want to know more of Great Britain, and they want to know more of Great Britain, and Great Britain should know more of us. Unless some means can be devised the foundation of Great Britain itself, the foundation of this great Empire, will be undermined. That is my humble opinion. I also believe that the people will see their commerce slipping away to the foreigner and the various branches of the Kingdom will become scattered units instead of a great united whole. We cannot forget that Great Britain is the Mother of the Empire, and that for generations at least the whole future of our vast Kingdom must depend upon her retaining her predominance as a world power. We readily acknowledge that in the time of our infancy Britain has protected her children, and that for many generations we hope she will be the mainstay of the Empire. And when in the over-sea portions of the Kingdom we see Britain's trade slipping away, I feel that we, as guardians of the