

Eleventh Day.
6 May 1907.

PREFERENTIAL
TRADE.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : Your figures are the total German exports, including raw material.

Mr. DEAKIN : Yes, everything.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I am taking manufactured goods. I should not be a bit surprised if Germany beats us in raw materials; she is a bigger country. She produces sugar; we cannot produce sugar here.

Mr. DEAKIN : You do not. Do not say you cannot.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : We do not think it worth our while because it employs such low priced labour. Sir William Lyne referred to a reduction in the number of agricultural labourers employed. That is very largely due to the fact that agricultural labour is the lowest priced in this country. You cannot get it. The agricultural labourer prefers to go into the town, where he gets much better pay and a better time altogether. It is most difficult to find agricultural labourers at any time. So difficult is it that we have had to import agricultural labourers from Ireland for harvest operations in this country, though, owing to the use of machinery, that has not been thought necessary in the last few years.

With regard to raw materials I do not know how we stand in comparison with Germany. I should not be a bit surprised if she beats us there. I am taking manufactured goods because they afford far and away the best test in my judgment of the present position of Great Britain and other countries. I have been drawn into a general argument upon questions I never thought of discussing.

Mr. DEAKIN : Then you were not making a statement from this table?

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I do not know anything about that table. I believe that is a Colonial Office table. I understand it is one of Sir Joseph Ward's returns.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : You may depend it is absolutely correct.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I am sure it is.

Mr. DEAKIN : They are not Sir Joseph Ward's figures, but they are in the form of statistics which were laid before the Conference of 1902, but revised and brought up to date.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I do not challenge them at all. No doubt the figures are absolutely correct. I am not impugning them at all; but I have not had time to examine them, so I do not know at all what their comparative effect is.

I should like to point out another thing, and it is this : When you come to the wages and hours of labour, and compare our wages and hours of labour with those obtaining in any protectionist country on the continent of Europe, this is the general effect. This is a comparison which has been made under the auspices of the late Government, and I am quoting from a document for which they are responsible. Mr. Chamberlain, I believe, was a member of the Government at the time this very document was issued; at any