

rate, Mr. Balfour was. This is the conclusion they have come to after examining the wages sheets of the Continent and comparing them with ours. "We might, without great error, take the average for Germany as two-thirds, and for France three-fourths, of that which prevails in the United Kingdom." That is the result. That was in 1902. I have much later figures than that, and I have here a table of the current rates for certain skilled occupations in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. In the United States of America the rates of wages is higher than on the continent of Europe, but that is for reasons which, in my judgment, have nothing to do with the fiscal question.

Eleventh Day.
6 May 1907.

PREFERENTIAL
TRADE.

(Mr.
Lloyd George.)

Dr. JAMESON : Is the argument that the rate of wages is lower in a tariff country because of the tariff, because that is contradicted by the United States ?

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I am not putting that argument at all, but that we are not suffering by our Free Trade system, and on the contrary have more than held our own in all the essentials of trade—in volume, in profit, in the pickings which not merely the producer and the manufacturer, but the merchant and the workman, derive out of the system. We compare favourably with every other country on the continent of Europe.

Sir JAMES MACKAY : And there is the shipowner's profit.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I have not forgotten him. I am coming to that, which is our greatest pride. I have these later returns. You must have some sort of standard figure, and I used the United Kingdom as 100. Take compositors to begin with : for every 100s. paid here in London you get in Berlin 72s. paid for the same work. Lithographic printers, for every 100s. paid here get 67s. in Berlin. Cabinet makers, for every 100s. paid here get 87s. in Berlin, and in all other towns in Germany 74s. I have got 15 trades here, and if you take all those trades put together you will find that for every 100s. paid here you will get 83s. paid in Berlin for the same job.

Mr. F. R. MOOR : Why are you quoting those figures ? What is the relative purchasing power of the shilling in Germany and over here ? Probably it is better living in Germany than in this country.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I am obliged to Mr. Moor for reminding me of that, because that is one of our strongest arguments. It is not merely that our workmen are paid higher wages, but their sovereign goes much further than the corresponding coin in Germany—much further. I shall be able to quote figures to show the reason why. Those figures are very relevant to the proposition which is now before the Conference. Our wages are higher ; our hours of labour are shorter even than in the United States of America. In a comparison between the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France, and Germany ; Germany, I think, comes out worst, France comes out next, the United States of America next, and the United Kingdom is best.

Mr. DEAKIN : Are you still including only manufactured goods ?

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : Yes. I am not referring now to the agricultural labourer working on the land.

Mr. DEAKIN : Nor to the miner.