

# MONSTER MEETING IN THE RINK

(Continued from page 2.)

I say here as I said on the floor of the House of Commons (and I knew of what I spoke and was willing that my friends in England where I am not unknown in relation to gold mining transactions might know the position I took) that I could have taken that contract which Mr. Sifton made with these contractors to build 140 miles of tramway and gone to London and got ten million pounds credit for that contract. What do you say to that, gentlemen? Is there a man here, is there one liberal in this audience that will say that a government who would be guilty of such an attempt as that upon the public revenue of Canada ought to be permitted to continue in office an hour longer than the people have an opportunity of getting rid of them. I do not think so. We said what do you mean by this contract? Oh, they said, it is of vital consequence to get an all-Canadian railway, a road that nobody can have any control of but the government of Canada. That is the reason we did this. We said here you read your contract. I said to them I have read the whole contract from end to end and under that contract the day that parliament ratified it these contractors can take it to New York and sell it to Americans and not a man in Canada would have anything to say about the road or anything connected with it. Well, they said, by George we never saw that; we are so glad you mentioned it; we will see the contractors (mind you they made a binding contract with these men, and were in their power). We then made a little diagram and held it up in the face of the Government party in the House of Commons. We read a clause of that contract and showed that while on the face of it it professed that these grants were to be in alternate sections, the Government of Canada retaining one and the contractor the other, this diagram demonstrated absolutely that under that contract the contractors could take every acre of gold in the Territory of the Yukon and leave the Government nothing. There were very long faces to be witnessed on the Government benches, and when the House rose the Government was pretty roughly handled by their supporters. And if you want proof of what I am saying let me tell you that down came the Minister of Agriculture to the House of Commons a couple of days afterwards and he said; we have corrected that, we have got the contractors to agree to alter the clause and now they cannot have the whole of the gold in the Yukon. Now I need not waste your time, ladies and gentlemen, in talking about the frightful enormity of such a transaction as that. I need not tell you that no Government would ever have attempted to dally and trifle in this manner with the parliament of Canada if they had not felt that the Liberal party would see them through in anything that was calculated to grasp public money irrespective of everything like law or right or justice. But this is a small matter compared with what followed. Down came reports from the Yukon Territory and in a short time it appeared that the Minister of the Interior had picked up people utterly unfit to carry on the administration of affairs in such a country as that, people who were intelligent enough but totally unfit to do any business of that kind. One of them was a captain of a whaler in the Province of Nova Scotia turned into a gold inspector and with what result. Why the result

that you will find on the Journals of the House the admission that he had a salary I think of \$1,300 a year, and found, that he was sick a good deal of the time; that he was only eleven months or something like that in office, but he was able to come back and deposit in the bank \$60,000 in his own name. Now a more scandalous and disgraceful piece of corruption, viewed with more cynical indifference to public opinion and sentiment, was never witnessed in any other parliament in the world. What do you suppose was Sir Wilfrid Laurier's answer when we said you have violated every pledge that you gave to the people of this country when you were seeking power. "Well," he said, "We are here and you are there," pointing to the Opposition benches, and that was all,—(laughter) an utter, sublime, cynical indifference to everything that would guard constitutional right and law and the proper and wise administration of public affairs. That is not the course that I believe the independent liberal electors of Prince Edward Island will endorse and sanction and set before their children. Now I am going to give you evidence of Sir Wilfrid Laurier having made one of the most solemn pledges on a most important question that a man could make to his fellow countrymen, provided they would give him power, and will show you the manner in which he has acted.

I had occasion in England to discuss at considerable length the question of mutual preferential trade. I have been 45 years in public life. From the first hour of my public life I have steadily kept my eye upon what means could be best adopted to give solidity and unity to the great British Empire—means that would at the same time promote the progress and prosperity of all the outlying portions of the Empire and preserve those British institutions that it is our pride and happiness to preserve as an integral portion of that great Empire. (Applause) I arrived at the conclusion that of all the means ever proposed the most effective would be to adopt a policy for Great Britain such as all other countries in the world adopt in regard to their colonies. Take Germany, take France, take Holland, take any country in the world which has colonies and you find that they treat their colonists upon different terms in regard to trade matters and fiscal matters from what they treat foreign countries. England alone being a free trade country treats foreigners and her colonies, on precisely the same footing. Now I came to the conclusion that nothing would bind this Empire together more indissolubly, nothing would promote its rapid progress, prosperity and greatness more quickly than a policy by which England would continue to receive free as at present everything that her colonies sent to her, and impose a small duty upon products of foreign countries that came into competition with those of her colonies. (Hear, hear, applause). This plan is adopted as I say by many foreign nations. In England a body of men was formed composed of distinguished members of the House of Lords, House of Commons, merchants, public men of various characters and patriotic citizens called the United Empire Trade League. They went to Lord Salisbury and asked him to have the Belgian and German treaties abrogated in order that such an arrangement as that could be entered into between the British Government and the Colonies. His answer was: It is a great question and you must educate the people. Go out if you believe in these views, and when the people are prepared to sustain such a policy, we will be quite prepared to take hold of it.

I took it up with all the zeal I could because I saw in that the germ of something that would make the British Empire greater and mightier than it is, (applause) which would give Canada, Australia and South Africa, the outlying portions of the Empire, such an impulse to them as nothing else could give; which would increase the value of every acre of land, of all the products of the soil, and give to the great agricultural industry of the country an immense impetus. I ad-

ressed a great meeting of the Chamber of Commerce in Montreal, where both French and English took up the subject with great warmth. Sir Wilfrid Laurier went up to Ontario, and people at once said to him, What do you think of preferential trade. Oh, he said, I have studied that, and I have come to the conclusion that it would be a most magnificent thing if it could be done for Canada, and I am as strongly in favor of it as Sir Charles Tupper. He pledged himself solemnly. He showed what Chamberlain had said that it was perfectly practicable, and he made an eloquent speech at London, Ont., in 1896, which you will find recorded in the columns of the Globe newspaper. He proclaimed in the most eloquent manner the enormous advantage it would be to Canada to get that policy. Then he went down to Westmount, near Montreal in the Province of Quebec, and pledged himself solemnly that if he got a majority his first act would be to send a commission to negotiate that policy of mutual preferential trade with Lord Salisbury. He got a majority, went in 1896 after the elections to attend to some business affairs in London. The United Empire Trade League invited me to a banquet and they expressed some regret at my defeat and they set back that this question of preferential trade would thus meet with. I said gentlemen you are entirely mistaken. I am happy to relieve your minds. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who has become Prime Minister of Canada in my place is as strongly pledged to this as I am. I believe he will redeem his pledge, with the result that you will have Canada united and I will support him as heartily in carrying it out as if I had continued in power. (Applause.) Sir Wilfrid Laurier went to England in 1897, at the time of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee when the whole heart of the Empire was open, when in Great Britain everybody was vying with each other in doing honor to the colonies in order to increase the bonds that bound us together. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the other premiers were met at Liverpool by the Duke of Devonshire, the President of the British Empire League, who made a speech telling them that England was greatly dissatisfied and disappointed at the result of free trade, and he pointed out that what Cobden had held out as the result of free trade had become completely illusory and he wound up by saying that England stood alone. He pointed out that all the world has gone the other way and built up tariffs higher and higher, and he finished his speech by saying that the time had come when England must look to her colonies for extension of trade. He made no cut-and-dried proposal, he had no authority to do it, but he said everything that a man could say and invited the Premiers to meet him half way. What do you think Sir Wilfrid Laurier did, the man who, in the most solemn manner, stated to the great electorate of Canada what he would do if he gained power. Did he renege his word; did he attempt to do it. No. On the very threshold, the day after he touched the soil of England, he turned his back upon that very preferential trade that he went there pledged to the people of Canada to do his utmost to get for them. He basely denounced it, and said that what Canada had done in reference to British trade had been done as a free gift, and they wanted nothing for it; that protection was a curse to Canada, and would be a curse to England, and that they did not want it and would reject it if it was offered to them. That is the position he took. There is a case of the basest betrayal of Canadian interests that ever stood against any public man in the history of Canada. (Applause) Down to this hour, ladies and gentlemen he has never vouchsafed any reason to justify him for that complete change of front, that turning his back upon all his solemnly pledged declarations and betraying in the most vital and important manner the dearest things of Canada. But I may say the course he pursued in this matter was the most effective means he could take to kill it. And why. You know perfectly well that if Mr. Chamberlain went to the House of Commons to advocate that mutual preferential trade policy he would point out to the artisans and to the operatives of England that if they adopted that policy the result would be that the products of England would be admitted on better terms in the colonies than before, but when that reduction is made and is given you have cut away the ground from under the feet of English statesmen and adopted and pressed that policy as it was being pressed. At the congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire I pressed that policy at great length. I moved a resolution in which I had the hearty support of Lord Strathcona, then Sir Donald Smith, as representative of the Montreal Board of Trade. On that occasion I had the support of 34 Chambers of Commerce of the Empire amongst 53 and everyone saw that the battle was won and that all that was required was to keep our shoulders to the wheel to secure the adoption of the policy.

But we are thrown back by Sir Wilfrid Laurier's base betrayal, and every independent Liberal newspaper is bound to admit his policy of fraud against the people of this country. If I had no other question on which to ask the verdict—the unanimous verdict—of every honest, intelligent, patriotic Liberal as well as Conservative in Canada, I would confidently ask it on such a case as that. (Hear, hear). The Minister of Finance had something to say upon this subject the other day, and while he does not undertake to question its value he has denounced my statement as to the means by which I think that great boon can still be obtained and the possibility of obtaining it as an arrant humbug. Well, I think Mr. Fielding is a little presumptuous to designate as arrant humbug a policy that only yesterday the Toronto Board of Trade passed a resolution in favor of—that that great question should be pressed and pressed now. The Ottawa and Montreal

Boards of Trade are also working in the same line. I will not detain you by reading extracts because I may take up too much of your time; but if you will look at the various journals, Liberal and Conservative, you will find that at the meeting of the representatives of the Boards of Trade held at Kenville the other day—the Maritime Board of Trade of these lower Provinces—there was passed a unanimous resolution endorsing this policy and demanding that it should be pressed. So I think Mr. Fielding will find that he has been a little presumptuous in designating that as an arrant humbug. I am in a position to say to you, gentlemen, having had a good deal of experience on both sides of the Atlantic, that old and advanced in life as I am, and short as the remaining period of my life must be, I still expect to see that great question of Mutual Preferential Trade established and become the policy of the British Empire. (Applause) Why do I have that confidence? I have that confidence because I am satisfied that there never was a time in the history of this great Empire when the minds of statesmen of all classes and parties were turned more strongly to the great question of how to bind these outlying portions of the Empire more closely and more indissolubly to the Mother Country than at present. And when they have examined the question of mutual preference in trade, they will find, in my judgment, that it will be the means of most effectively accomplishing this purpose, and rendering that British Empire, as I said before, mightier and greater even than it is today. That is the confidence I have, but what more. When we find that Australia, which has just been confederated under one government, which will have as its first Premier Mr. Barton, the gentleman who succeeded Mr. Reid in the only free trade colony in all Australia—New South Wales—when we find that great Commonwealth of Australia united with Canada, and the provinces in South Africa, Natal, Cape Colony, etc., soon to become a solid South Africa all joining in this policy, and when we point out to England that one of the most vital questions that can ever touch the British Empire is the question of food supply, this will be the solution of the problem. This war is turning the attention of the public men and statesmen of England more strongly than perhaps ever before to the fact that great as is their progress, mighty as their navy, enormous as is their military power—nowwithstanding all that, there is the danger of the food supply running short in England. But their statesmen are realizing that here in Canada alone, the nearest great possession of the Crown to the British Islands, we could supply under a policy of that kind six hundred millions of bushels of food for which Great Britain today has to depend upon foreign countries. Yes today England annually imports for her own population articles from foreign countries that under the policy I proposed Canada could supply. Take the question of wheat. Mr. Greenway the defeated Premier in Manitoba, in his manifesto (he is a wealthy farmer in that Province of farmers) declared that last year Manitoba and the North West Territories has produced no less than fifty millions of bushels of the finest wheat that grows upon the earth. He pointed out that they had the soil and everything necessary, provided they had the population and the capital as he believed they would have at no distant day, to increase that ten-fold and to grow 500 millions of bushels of wheat, there would be the solution of the great question in which England is so deeply and vitally interested. I am not going to detain you on that question, great and important as it is, further than to say that it is in my judgment one of the most vitally important questions that the people of Canada have before them today—a question on which every honest, every intelligent man, Liberal or Conservative, ought to speak with no uncertain sound in view of the fact that the dearest rights and interests and the pledged word have been thrown overboard and the pledged word of the Prime Minister of Canada forfeited in regard to that important question.

Now I am almost ashamed to look at my watch because I have behind me one of the most able and eloquent public speakers in Canada, a man who has no rival on the floor of parliament as a debater and when you have heard him here

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you will agree with me. I refer to the Honorable George E. Foster. (Applause) I am anxious that you should hear him; but I should fail in my duty to you and to the public if I did not just for a few moments turn your attention to the actions of Sir Louis Davies in politics. I have already shown you that on the great question of the Canadian Pacific Railway, that everybody now admits is so vitally important, he took the strongest possible ground and had he possessed the power to carry out his views and opinions we would have had no great inter-oceanic line of railway binding our country together to-day. I want to turn your attention to his position on the question of treaties. I dare say you know that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has issued—I will not say issued, but has authorized the issue of Pointers No. 2—and amongst those he has, I think, very unfairly garbled some of the views of Sir Louis, amongst others those upon the question of the fiscal policy. They state that in 1897 I objected to the tariff, and now that I say they have taken our policy and that it is unobjectionable. Both statements are untrue. In 1897 the tariff at I objected to was a tariff not giving a preference in England although they said that it would have that effect, but giving a reduction—a large reduction to all the countries in the world, that would reciprocate. Now, what did that mean. It meant this, that as stated by them it was the entering wedge of the destruction of the National Policy, and I denounced that policy. And after my denunciation the government came down and changed in twenty important particulars the tariff that I had then denounced. The year afterwards they changed totally the fundamental principle of the policy of 1897, because they repealed the Act under which all the countries in the world could come in and confine their preference absolutely to England. I had a somewhat warm controversy with my friend, Sir Louis Davies, who treated with great sycophancy my want of knowledge of constitutional law when I told them that what they proposed could not be done, that it was unconstitutional, and in violation of the treaties, and that they did not know what they were talking about. Sir Louis Davies made his usual vehement speech and denounced my want of knowledge of law as utterly puerile, and said that the merest tyro in law knew that my views were altogether at fault. As I am not a lawyer, I did not feel particularly hurt at having my opinions on legal points criticised, but on the question of constitutional law, to which I had paid some attention, I took the liberty of telling Sir Louis Davies that I thought he would find himself very much mistaken. What happened. He went to England and was going to instruct the law officers of the Crown. (Laughter) But he came back with the admission that his party were all wrong

and I was all right, and that the Attorney General and Solicitor General of England stood by my law and had thrown his overboard. (Laughter and applause). He reminded me very much of a little story which I dare say many of you have heard, but which I think will bear repetition on the present occasion. An American gentleman had a lawsuit, and some legal transactions he wanted attended to in Canada. He went to a friend and said, "Who do you recommend me to employ?" He said, "I recommend you to employ Mr. So-and-So." The American employed him, and the suit was tried but the American lost it. He went back to his friend and said, "What do you mean by recommending such a lawyer as that; he has lost the case, does not understand it at all, does not know anything about law." Oh, said the other "he is a Queen's Counsel." "Well," said the American if he is a Queen's Counsel for the first time in my life I say from the bottom of my heart "God Save the Queen." (laughter and applause) Your representative did not cover himself with any glory or credit in reference to that matter.

(Continued to-morrow)

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