

Lake of the Woods a question has arisen of interest to both countries. About the shores of the lake in both countries there have been a number of Indians living, about one thousand in this country, and three thousand in the United States. Our Government recognized the necessity of supporting and endeavouring to promote the interests of the Indians. But unfortunately the buffalo having disappeared, their means of subsistence has rapidly disappeared and the preservation of the fish is, therefore, an important question in the interests of the Indian population. Now, however, the American Government have agreed with our Government to assist them in regulating the fishing and preserving the fish in the whole lake. No effective measure could be carried out by this Government alone, and this House will rejoice not only that the question of the pollution of the streams, but also this question in regard to the preservation of the fishing in the Lake of the Woods, in which our Indian population are directly interested, have been amicably settled with the Government of the United States, in a manner which will prove in the interest of both parties. No doubt the leader of the Opposition, in referring to this clause with which I have been dealing, will point out that it is quite as remarkable for what it omits as for what it contains. No doubt he will call attention to the fact that it contains no reference to the proceedings in view of freer trade relations with which the visit of the Ministers to Washington has been commonly connected. But, I am sure, the members of the House feel confident that when in due time the Ministers engaged in that duty bring their report before the House, it will be found that the Ministers on going to Washington have carried out faithfully the pledges made to the country, that they have honestly and seriously striven to secure freer trade relations with the United States; and I have no doubt it will be found that in all their negotiations, in all their deliberations, in all overtures made, and in all the discussions and proceedings of the conference, our Ministers have invariably kept a keen eye on the honour of Canada, and I am sure it will be found, and the House will rejoice when such appears, that whatever overtures were made, Her Majesty's Ministers in Canada never forgot that this country is a British colony possessing a loyal people, and that all negotiations must be based on this principle, that we will never discriminate against British goods. In offering these remarks I speak not with the authority of one of Her Majesty's Ministers, but as a humble member of the House and a member of the Conservative party, who has that confidence in the Ministry of the day as to believe that the policy just mentioned will be the policy carried out by them. It would be out of place at the present time, and I have neither time nor inclination, to enter into a discussion of the question of reciprocity or unrestricted reciprocity. I would, however, beg to remind some of our friends in this House, of this fact, apart altogether from the merits of the question, from the consideration whether the Reform or Conservative policy in this matter is right, that there is not only among the people of the country but among members of this House a misunderstanding of the position of the Conservative party with respect to this question. I speak thus because in recent elections I have known hon. members making representations as to

the position of the Conservative party which—for I cannot believe that the position was intentionally wrongly stated—indicated that there must be misunderstanding as to our position; and if members, who have listened to all the debates, still fail to grasp the position of the Conservative party on this question it is not remarkable that throughout the length and breadth of the country there are people who fall into the same error. As I have said, without going into the question of the merits one way or the other, I should like to remind our friends of the Opposition that we of the Conservative party are as anxious for reciprocity with the United States as they are, that we have proved again and again our desire to obtain freer trade relations, and we have shown practically time and time again our intention to secure freer trade relations if possible. But I wish also to remind the Opposition of the fact, which they seem to forget, that while the Conservative party are desirous of securing freer trade relations with the United States, we fully and clearly understand the difference between reciprocity and unrestricted reciprocity. I would like to remind them that while they point with pride to the fact that in former days there was a reciprocity treaty and that this country was prosperous under reciprocity, we, the Conservative party, agree that there was a reciprocity treaty and prosperity did reign in that time; but we are not ignorant of this further fact, that there were other causes existing at that time, which do not exist now, which may fully account for the prosperity. For, without professing to enumerate all the causes of difference between that day and this, surely no one can have watched the building of railways and failed to understand the effect on the position of the people of the building of the Grand Trunk Railway, which was commenced at about that time. Reciprocity was secured in 1854, and I can well understand how all the people, Conservatives and Reformers, agreed that reciprocity was necessary, because the United States was the natural market, and in fact apart from the home market was the only market, because there were not then means of communication with the sea-board and between Great Britain and this country to enable our people to send their products to another land even if they had so desired. During that time also other railways were built, the Great Western and the Northern. Again, the Crimean war broke out, during which thousands of men were called to arms by the great nations of the world, and they had to be fed, and inasmuch as the North-West was unopened, and the western States had not sprung into existence, and Egypt and the Argentine republic as grain producers were unknown, we found a steady demand for all we could produce. Thus the Crimean war was a cause which existed then and does not exist now. We know, too, that very shortly after that war terminated the great rebellion in the adjoining republic commenced, a rebellion during which hundreds of thousands of the citizens were taken from their homes, taken from their families, taken from the fields they had been tilling, and had to be supported by their respective Governments. It is true that, while through that civil war the demand for agriculture products increased, the supplies fell off. These were exceptional occurrences which would not arise if we had unrestricted reciprocity to-morrow; but, Sir, it