

good reason on the part of the hon. First Minister and his colleagues, at any rate, for striving to avoid incurring an expression of the opinion of the House on the conduct of that hon. gentleman. And lastly, Sir, and this goes to the root of the whole matter, it is notorious that there was a serious division in the Cabinet. It is notorious that one member was opposed to reciprocity, even in natural products, and to do him justice, I regard his position as the only logical and consistent position of the whole of them; while it is equally well known that another member of the Cabinet belonging to the same Province, believed that it was in the highest degree in the interest of the country, and especially of his own Province, to obtain reciprocity in those same natural products. How was the country, under these circumstances, to ascertain what the position of the Government was on this question? Sir, if ever there should have been another Session of Parliament, and if ever the Government should declare distinctly where they stood on these questions, and should give us an opportunity to appeal to the people at a time when their will could be clearly expressed, it was under the circumstances which existed at the time this dissolution took place. Now, I say that, in this condition of things, only in case of downright overpowering necessity could a dissolution be granted at all. What was the overpowering necessity? It was, according to the statement made at the time, that these hon. gentlemen should go to Washington on the 6th of March, in order to confer with the British Ambassador and the American Government. But the fact is, not only did they not go on the 6th of March, but there is not the least chance of their obtaining an audience with the American Government at all until late in the autumn. We cannot refrain from believing that His Excellency was very grievously deceived by his advisers, and that a most gross abuse of his prerogative took place when he granted a dissolution without any better reason than has been assigned either by the First Minister or the press which usually supports him. More, I say that the conduct of the Government in sending this embassy or delegation, or whatever you please to call it, to Washington, requires a pretty considerable deal of explanation. The Government had been notified expressly of what the United States Government would not accept. They knew perfectly well that if they went to Washington to offer reciprocity in natural products only they would not obtain a hearing. Now, if those hon. gentlemen adhere to the position, whatever it was, they originally laid down; if they adhere to the position laid down by Mr. Colby last Session on the floor of this House, and which I understood the right hon. gentleman to indicate this afternoon he is disposed to maintain; if they have no intention of offering to the United States anything but that meagre limited reciprocity which the United States Government have declared they will not entertain, then to send delegates to Washington to confer with the United States Government was a piece of mockery, under the circumstances, little short of a deliberate and premeditated farce. But if, on the other hand, they have altered their position; if, as there is considerable reason to believe, they found themselves compelled to

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.

abandon that, and made up their minds to propose a wider measure of reciprocity, then what grounds have these hon. gentlemen for attacking and slandering hon. gentlemen on this side of the House for proposing to do precisely what the Government knew they would have to do if they wanted to obtain anything at all? What have these hon. gentlemen done? To all practical intents and purposes they have succeeded only in making themselves the laughing-stock of the United States. Two of those hon. gentlemen who went to Washington are present. The other, for satisfactory reasons, I fancy, has found it convenient to retreat on London, where, by-the-by, I am rather pleased to hear he is getting the warm reception such as some of his conduct and speeches deserve. Let these gentlemen, however, who are here, explain why it was they went to Washington. Various pretexts have been put forward by their press to explain the reception they met. One day we were told, forsooth, that a message postponing the conference was, by some inexplicable misunderstanding, or owing to some unaccountable confusion or delay, not telegraphed from Washington or not received here in time. Then we were told that this was precisely what the Government desired—that they did not want to meet at all; that all they wanted was to have an excuse to prevent discussion on the floor of this House. And I saw some conjectures, both in a portion of the United States press and our own, that the treatment accorded to the Canadian envoys was dictated by a desire of Mr. President Harrison to snub Mr. Blaine. It reminded me of the custom we are told existed in the olden days, when a whipping-boy was always provided for royalty who would receive on his person the castigation for the offences committed by the youthful prince, and thus the ends of justice would be served and the privileged skin of the original offender saved. If it be true that the cause of this somewhat unceremonious reception and the retirement of our commissioners was due to the fact that President Harrison wanted to snub Mr. Blaine, I congratulate our delegates on the lofty and elevated position which they attained. I notice another explanation, so ingenious that it really deserves a word of passing attention. We are told that the whole business was a collusion, a put-up job between Mr. Blaine and our High Commissioner. Our High Commissioner was wanted in London to deal with these rebellious Newfoundlanders; and it was intimated to Mr. Blaine that it would be highly convenient to our High Commissioner to bring the business to an abrupt termination, so that he might be enabled to transfer himself to London and there protect the interests of Canada against the Newfoundlanders. I say it is time for us to consider the situation, which is a grave one. I cannot accept, for my part, either the silence of the right hon. the leader of the House or the excuses made by his friends and supporters. What has happened, to my mind, is this: The Government of Canada have been told emphatically, in a way no man can pretend not to understand, and to which it is idle for us to affect to shut our eyes, that they are not wanted at Washington. And they have been told more; they have been told that they will have to learn their own minds, that they will have to learn to submit a reasonable and fitting proposal before they are likely to meet with any consideration at