

brought to the attention of the House at the proper moment. I am surprised at my hon. friend supposing that we ran after the Grand Trunk Company in order to ask them to accept more generous conditions. Instead of that, representations were made to us by the representatives of the board that they could not finance the enterprise if we adhered to the rigid conditions we had imposed upon them; and in order to facilitate the work, we came to the conclusion that we should make the modifications which we have placed before the House, and to which we shall ask the sanction of the House in a few days.

My hon. friend referred to several matters which he called omissions from the speech—the admission of Newfoundland into the confederation, provincial autonomy for the Northwest, the treaty-making power, and the joint high commission. There was no omission of these from the speech, because in my opinion none of them are subjects which should be included in the speech of the Governor General. They are all subjects familiar to the House, which will come in review at a later day every one of them, perhaps, except the subject of the joint high commission. As that subject will probably not come up again, I will speak of it now. I have only to say, in answer to the inquiry of the hon. leader of the opposition as to the position in which the joint high commission stands to-day, that it stands to-day just as it did in the month of February, 1899, when it was adjourned. It was adjourned subject to the call of the two chairmen of the commission itself. My hon. friend wants to know what is to be our attitude—shall the commission be convened again or not? I have only to repeat what I have stated before on the floor of this House and elsewhere, that it is not the purpose of the Canadian government to go to the United States for favours of any kind whatever. If it pleases the United States authorities to have the joint high commission re-convened—to have better relations established than those which we have had for the last few years, we are always ready to meet them and to receive their advances. But so far as the Canadian government are concerned, we have nothing to ask from our American neighbours. We want to be on good terms with them; we are ready at all times to negotiate with them on fair terms, but we shall not take the initiative for new negotiations. If new negotiations are to take place, it must be on their initiative. We have received no invitation from them lately, and therefore so far as I know the joint high commission is not again to be convened.

With regard to the treaty-making power, I have only one word to say. I will not discuss that subject this evening; it is of too great importance for that; but I will welcome an opportunity later on to discuss it and to present it to the Canadian

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

people. It is not a new subject; it is a very old one. It has been a plank in the platform of the Liberal party for some thirty years. If I were to go back to the initiation of this subject, I would go back to the year 1870, when Mr. Huntington introduced a resolution claiming for Canada the treaty-making power. The subject was taken up later on by Mr. Blake, by my right hon. colleague the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Rt. Hon. Sir Richard Cartwright), and by the late Mr. Mills. My hon. friend asks: Have you not to-day all the powers you want? Can you not be represented into any treaty which may be negotiated? But while it is true that Canada would be invited into any treaty which might take place, in which our interests would be concerned, still we have believed in the past that this would not be sufficient for our national development, and that the day was coming nearer and nearer when we ought to have full treaty-making powers for ourselves. But, says my hon. friend, this would carry the right of peace and war. I can tell my hon. friend that he is under a very erroneous impression. We have no intention of acquiring any such right. Take the matter with which we have just been dealing, the matter of the Alaskan boundary treaty. What we want is the right of taking the initiative, of carrying on the negotiations, and of being responsible, but it does not follow that we want to dispense altogether with the power and authority of the mother country. On the contrary, never, in any resolution presented to it, was the Canadian parliament asked to claim the power of negotiating treaties without any reference to the authority of the Crown of England. All that was ever asked was that we should have the power to negotiate. I am sorry that I have not here the motion made on that subject by Mr. Blake in 1882, but I have the motion made by Mr. Mills in 1892, which is substantially the same. Mr. Mills moved:

That it is expedient to obtain the necessary powers to enable Her Majesty the Queen, through her representative the Governor General of Canada, upon the advice of his Minister, to appoint an agent to negotiate commercial treaties with other British possessions or foreign states subject to the prior consent or subsequent approval of the parliament of Canada.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Has that right ever been denied to Canada?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The right of negotiating our own treaties?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Has what is asked in that motion ever been denied?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. It never was granted.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Has it ever been denied?