

and spoken of sometimes as a self-governing dependency. We are that, and we are much more. The Canadian confederation is of vastly more importance as regards the Empire than any single colony can possibly be. It has greater duties, and to those duties, as I contend, are and must be attached greater rights. We have to maintain peace and order throughout half of the continent, as other colonies have to do in other portions of the Empire; but we have also to deal wisely and prudently with a neighbour which represents one of the most powerful nations on the face of the earth. Again, I say that the duties imposed on us give us corresponding rights, and we have a right to ask for a much freer hand as representing the confederation of Canada, in the peculiar position we occupy in North America, than any other ordinary colony of Great Britain can ever fairly demand. We have a duty to ourselves, we have a duty to the Empire, and to the adjoining nation to fulfil.

The hon. gentleman alluded to the mission to Washington, undertaken by myself and the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries. Sir, I have to say to hon. gentlemen opposite that we returned from Washington perfectly convinced of two things. We returned from Washington perfectly convinced of the fact that the foolish conduct—I use the word advisedly—perhaps not so much on the part of the leader of the Opposition as of some others of our predecessors, had placed immense difficulties in the way of an immediate and honourable settlement with the United States. But I do not want on this occasion to introduce, unnecessarily, what may be called contentious matter, and therefore I forbear going into details of the various methods and ways in which those hon. gentlemen had created bad blood between ourselves and the United States. If there be any hon. member who wants to know the extent to which they went, I recommend him to peruse a certain very interesting speech, which he will find delivered in the year of grace 1888, and recorded in "Hansard" at pages 690-92, delivered by the present leader of the Opposition, to show to his followers how near we had gone to the very verge of actual war with the United States. But, as I have said, it is not my present intention to dwell on that point. We returned from Washington seeing and feeling that great mistakes had been committed, but seeing and feeling likewise that it was not impossible, if a more prudent and statesmanlike course were adopted, by showing the Americans that we are willing to trade with them on fair terms, by showing that we desired to be good neighbours of theirs, that we had no wish in the slightest degree to irritate and annoy them, to obtain at a little later day and under more favourable circumstances a treaty which would be honourable to both parties. In regard to the United States, I hold, as I have always held, that it is the duty of the Government of

Canada to be both courteous and firm. I am not going to advise yielding unnecessarily to the United States, but I have not the slightest hesitation in asserting and declaring here that both in our interest and in the interest of the British Empire, it is of the highest possible moment to cultivate feelings of good neighbourhood with the United States, and while I hold office and while I have a word to say in our affairs with the United States, I shall advise our friends and our press, and I would bring to bear any influence I possess to ensure that in our dealings with the United States we should deal with them as a people with whom we are very closely connected, and whom we desire to reunite, if possible, if not on friendly trade relations, at all events on friendly terms with the rest of the British race. Sir, we are glad, we desire to trade with the United States on fair terms. We welcome them if they choose to accept our offers; but, Mr. Speaker, if the United States see fit to refuse—and they have the right to refuse, if they see fit to frame their tariff in a way which makes it impossible to trade with them, all I can say is, that we will frame our tariff as we believe the interests of Canada require.

We do not, and we have not yielded to the popular clamour to the extent of retaliating on the United States. We do not retaliate on the United States. Where it is in the interests of the people of Canada to admit United States goods at a lower rate, as in the matter of corn and of iron, we have dared to do it. Nor have we raised the duties against the United States. We have undoubtedly offered better terms to these countries who trade with us fairly, but that offer has been made to the United States just as freely as it has to any other country; even to Great Britain herself. Sir, I say that in dealing with the United States, above all other peoples, good sense and good temper are needed on our part. We will not cringe nor snarl, but we will do our best—without underrating the great value of the trade with the United States—we will do our best, if we must do so, to enable ourselves to develop our own trade and our own resources, utterly and completely independent of any other power.

As to England, I submit that the case is very different. Our Government intend to bring the matter of our relations with Great Britain to a head, and if the Opposition in this House possess real courage and patriotism, they will accept the advice tendered to them by the London "Times." I say, Sir, that instead of carping at the proposal, they should be glad to help it forward. Sir, in time past these hon. gentlemen have made every hustings ring, have made the floors of Parliament ring with their professions of loyalty and devotion to the old flag. They have a chance to prove their loyalty now. They have repeatedly declared their desire to show independence of the United States.