

plication to the United States, but when we found that we had been rebuffed, that our advances had not been received as favourably as we thought they should have been, then we thought it was consistent with our dignity not to make any further efforts to obtain reciprocity, and I stated then, speaking for the government, not that we had changed our views on this subject, but that we had ceased to believe that it would be in the interest of the country to have reciprocity, but that we would make no more advances to our neighbours to gain that boon, but that if it came, it would come from them, and not from us. This is the explanation of the change we have had—no change of principle or policy, but simply a position which we thought to be more consistent with our own dignity.

Why, Sir, do I state these facts? Is it simply for the purpose of showing my hon. friend that his memory is at fault? No, Sir, I state these facts to show that the position taken by my hon. friend, that we have no mandate to negotiate with our neighbours, has no foundation whatever. My hon. friend tried to show, from certain words of mine, at the last Imperial conference in 1907, that we had abandoned our position on reciprocity. The words which he quoted were as follows:

There was at one time wanted reciprocity with them (the United States) but our efforts and our offers were negatived and put aside, and we have said good-bye to that trade, and we have put all our hopes upon the British trade now.

My hon. friend concluded from these words that there was an abandonment of our policy; but my hon. friend did not do me justice in quoting a single part of a sentence. No one knows better than my hon. friend that it is hardly fair to a man to extract a sentence from a whole passage and quote simply that. I will quote the whole passage, and then the House can draw its own conclusion. This is what I said at the conference:

Between the preferential tariff and the general tariff we have now an intermediate tariff. The object of this intermediate tariff is to enter into negotiations with other communities to have trade arrangements with them. It has been supposed that this was to hit our American neighbours. With our American neighbours we should be only too glad to trade on a better footing than at the present time. We are next door neighbours and in many things we can be their best market, as in many things they can be our best market. We should be glad to trade with them, but it never was intended, nor thought at the time, that this intermediate tariff could apply to the United States. There was at one time wanted reciprocity with them, but our efforts and our offers were negatived and put aside, and we have said good-bye to that trade, and we have put all our hopes upon the British trade now.

Sir, there is a different meaning in the words which I uttered at the conference from the meaning sought to be conveyed

by my hon. friend. I was not surprised, however, at the attitude taken by my hon. friend on that occasion. He and I have sat opposite one another for a long time, he knows me and I know him. But I must say that I was more than astonished when I heard my hon. friend from Brandon (Mr. Sifton) the other day take exactly the same position. My hon. friend from Brandon in the course of an able speech, for which everybody will give him his due, said that he had long ago had his doubts about reciprocity, that he had begun to doubt about it as far back as the campaign of 1901. I believe that my hon. friend's conversion has not been so gradual. It has been more sudden than he thinks himself, because my hon. friend was at the liberal convention of 1903, and he agreed to this resolution which was adopted as part of the policy of the party to which he then belonged.

That a fair and liberal reciprocity treaty would develop the great natural resources of Canada, would enormously increase the trade and commerce between the two countries, would tend to encourage friendly relations between the two peoples, would remove many causes which have in the past provoked irritation and trouble to the governments of both countries, and would promote those kindly relations between the people and the republic which afford the best guarantee for peace and prosperity. That the liberal party is prepared to enter into negotiations with a view to obtaining such a treaty, including a well considered list of manufactured articles, and we are satisfied that any treaty so arranged will receive the assent of Her Majesty's government, without whose approval no treaty can be made.

My hon. friend from Brandon, like my hon. friend from North Toronto (Mr. Foster), has asserted that we have abandoned that policy. I am not conscious of it. It has been dormant, I admit, because we had taken the ground that we would make no more efforts to obtain from our neighbours what had been refused to us. But I deny altogether that there was ever any change by the liberal party of the policy then laid down in 1893. My hon. friend from Brandon also took the ground, as my hon. friend from North Toronto had done before him, that we had no mandate on this subject from the people, in the last general election. It is true that in 1900, 1904 and 1908 the question of reciprocity was not an issue at all because at that time there was no difference of opinion between the liberal party and the Conservative party upon that question. There was none so far as I know, and so far as everybody knew.

I take issue with my hon. friend from North Toronto (Mr. Foster) and my hon. friend from Brandon (Mr. Sifton) when they tell us that the parliament of Canada is debarred from dealing with any question which has not been discussed at the previous general election. That is not in accord with the constitutional history of Great Britain or of Canada either, as I have read