

to sit down to the examination, the discussion, and the revision of a tariff, consisting of from nine hundred to a thousand items, and preparing the revision for submission to this House. I am glad the hon. leader of the Opposition was good enough to read to the House the statement which I made on this subject in another place—I think at the Board of Trade banquet in Toronto in the year 1892. On that occasion I made the statement that it would be proper to delay the revision of the tariff until some indication had been given of the policy which would be pursued in another country; and while hon. gentlemen opposite may make merry with the phrase about looking to Washington, and all that, we adhere still to the business principle, as we regard it, that no sensible Government would undertake to revise its own tariff, seeing that a neighbouring country was engaged in the same operation, until it had some opportunity of observing the progress of events there, knowing that the revision of the tariff there in progress will affect all the business transactions and operations of this country for the next few years at least. It may be that before we enter upon the discussion of that subject in this House, the measure will not be completed in the other country; but, Sir, we shall have done the best we could; we shall have delayed as far as possible—not to look for an example to the other country, not to look there for guidance as to the tariff we ought to make for Canada, but for information on a matter of pure and solid business which this House will shortly have to undertake. Let me remind the House further of the statement we have made in previous sessions, and have also made in discussing this matter sometimes throughout this country, that it was our desire to meet the Government of the United States and the legislature of that country, as far as we consistently could—consistently with regard to our revenue, and consistently with regard to the principles on which our tariff is based, and the preservation of those principles. We were anxious to meet with good-will any propositions which the Government of the United States would be willing to make, or which Congress might be willing to make, in favour of the enhancement of the trade between the two countries. Would it not have been a violation of that idea—a violation of that principle, a violation of that offer of good-will, which was no more cordially stated by us than pressed upon us by the Opposition—if we had undertaken to convene the House and bring down a tariff regardless altogether of what the neighbouring country might do? Surely, Sir, if we were sincere, as I can assure the House we were, in offering, by any means within our power, and consistently with the interests which I have mentioned, to take measures to increase the trade between these two countries, the least we could do was to wait to see what progress

was being made on the other side of the line, in the way of the lessening of duties, or otherwise, which might tend to increase that trade on their part, in order that we might reciprocate by similar legislation on our part. I think that no reproach could have been more fair and more unanswerable than that which would have come from the other side if we had asked the House to deal with this whole subject in ignorance of the views of Congress, and had prorogued the House to wait another year before a single step could have been made towards an enlargement of the trade between the two countries, if any such step is to be taken. I hope the hon. leader of the Opposition will not suspect me of disrespect for him, for the speech which he has delivered to the House to-day, if, in addition to taking strong issue with him as to the condition of the country at the present time, I shall venture to suggest to the House that that speech exhibited a marked tone of dissatisfaction, a note of profound discontent with the existing state of affairs, and an unwillingness to be pleased with any phase of public affairs. And more, Sir, it exhibited an unwillingness to be pleased with any phase of public affairs in this country. Why, the hon. gentleman made merry over the deliberations of the Ministers who went to a meeting in Montreal to receive a number of deputations there, and who went afterwards to the Maritime Provinces and there received deputations likewise. He made it a matter of complaint that these gentlemen should have excluded the press when these deputations were received, and afterwards, in attempting to define what was taking place in those secret councils, the hon. gentleman treated us to an extract from Shakespeare to show how absurd the whole transaction was. I do not so regard these conferences. It has been customary, ever since I knew anything of public affairs—and I am sure it was customary when hon. gentlemen opposite ruled—to receive deputations who desired to present their views, whether with regard to trade or anything else, without the proceedings being reported in the press. Such is generally the wish of gentlemen connected with business who come upon deputations relating to their affairs. It is not always, or by any means common, that the desire for reserve and to avoid publicity comes from any nefarious design upon their part, or any desire to screen themselves from public investigation and criticism because of anything they have to conceal. But it frequently does happen that gentlemen have matters to discuss in connection with their own business transactions, in connection with the profits of those business transactions, which may have been misrepresented, or with regard to the expenditure of capital involved in their enterprise, which it is not always convenient to have reported in the newspaper press. I think that even that deputation which went to the Finance Min-