

not altogether prepared to go back on the action, but he thinks a mistake was made, and I do not know that that makes it any better.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—In the light of five years' experience.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I have pointed out that the hon. gentleman, in the course of an hour's speech, expressed himself on a great many questions, at variance with the policy of the Liberal party, of which he is the leader in this House. For a speech of an hour, that appears to me to be a pretty good record. My hon. friend the senior member for Halifax, referring to the French treaty, expressed himself of the opinion that that treaty was a free trade measure and he asked why the government did not go further and adopt free trade all round. I am sure that my hon. friend is clear-headed enough to know that if the government adopted free trade all round, they would not be able to make very many reciprocity treaties with other countries. The hon. gentleman must know very well that free trade and reciprocity are perfectly incompatible. A country that adopts a free trade policy can make no reciprocity treaty; it has no basis to go on, and it is only a country that has a policy such as we have, which can make a reciprocity treaty with any country. I have here a pamphlet issued by the Cobden Club of England, which is headed "The Reciprocity craze." It denounces the idea of Great Britain negotiating reciprocity treaties as a craze, regarding it as perfectly incompatible with free trade doctrines.

With regard to the Manitoba school question which is alluded to in the address, and very much discussed by gentlemen who have preceded me, I wish to say a few words before I pass on to a discussion of some other matters. In the first place I wish to point out that it is not a question between Catholics and Protestants at all and should not be so regarded. When the Manitoba Constitutional Act was passed the Protestants were a minority in Manitoba and the Catholics had a small majority. The provision in the British North America Act, as found in subsection 3 of section 93 was not placed there in the interest of the Catholics at all, but, as I understand from my reading of political his-

tory, in the interest of the Protestant minority in the province of Quebec. Now, having these facts in mind, we should approach the question without any regard whatever to its creed aspect, because Protestants are a minority in the province of Quebec, and if the rights of the Catholic minority in Manitoba are encroached upon or invaded by the majority, the same or similar rights enjoyed by the Protestant minority in Quebec might be encroached upon some day. Therefore, it is in the interest of all creeds and all classes to approach this question with a sense of what is right, altogether irrespective of whether Catholics or Protestants are affected in the case which is now engaging the public attention. Neither is this a question as to whether secular or denominational schools are the best for Canada or any part of Canada. That question very properly came up and, no doubt, to some extent was considered when the Manitoba Constitutional Act was considered. That was the time for the framers of that act to have considered the question as to whether denominational or secular schools were best or those that should be provided for the province of Manitoba. But, at the present time and in the present state of the question, that aspect of it does not come up for discussion. And it is not a question now as to whether the schools established under the Manitoba School Act of 1890 are Protestant schools or secular schools. The leader of the Liberal party in the other House, in many speeches which he has delivered throughout the country during the last three or four years, seems to think it a very important question as to whether the schools that have been brought into existence under the Act of 1890 in the province of Manitoba, are Protestant schools or secular schools, and the hon. gentleman appeared to think (if I could draw any inference from his references to that subject), that if they were secular schools, there remained nothing upon which the public mind should be disturbed at all. Now, I do not think that that reaches the question. It is not important or material to the controversy whether they are secular or Protestant schools. The hon. gentleman knows that they are not the schools that were guaranteed to the minority under the Manitoba Act of 1870. Nor do I think that it is a question of very great importance to this discussion, whether the separate schools which existed