

their power to continue the Reciprocity Treaty on terms favorable to this Province. The attention of this government had also been drawn by the Committee on Fisheries to the exaction of duties by the Newfoundland government from our fishermen on the Labrador coast. Money had also to be provided for the construction of the Pictou line of railway on as favorable terms as possible. The government, too, had been authorized by this house to obtain the services of a thoroughly competent Inspector of Mines. Immigration was another subject which we felt was pressing upon our notice, and might be considerably promoted by the information we would be able to obtain in London on the subject. The result was that the Attorney General and myself were appointed delegates to proceed to England in connection with these very important questions. We proceeded to England and the result of our visit is detailed in the papers which are now before you.

I may state, however, that we had the honour of an interview with the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies soon after our arrival. At that interview my colleague and myself stated the deep interest the people of Nova Scotia felt in the renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty, and called the attention of Mr. Cardwell to the fact that, notwithstanding the representations made by this Government upon the right to be consulted in relation to any treaty which would deal so largely with the territorial interests of this Province, we observed with surprise and regret that in the paper recently laid before Parliament, and which we had seen for the first time after our arrival in England, it was stated that Sir Frederick Bruce, the British Minister at Washington, had only been instructed to confer with the Government of Canada upon that subject. Mr. Cardwell replied that the action taken by her Majesty's Government had been at the instance of a deputation from the Canadian Government, and that they would now be prepared to give the fullest consideration to any representations which we had to offer on the part of Nova Scotia. We urged the rights which all the Provinces interested had to be consulted in regard to a Reciprocity Treaty affecting the whole, and the increased weight which their joint and co-operative action would give to any proposals which might be submitted, and the greater security which would be afforded that any treaty concurred in by representatives from the different governments of all the colonies would be accepted by the various Legislatures by which such treaty would require to be adopted. We also referred to the desirability of an early understanding between the governments of the different colonies as to the best means of meeting the altered circumstances in their trade, in case the Reciprocity Treaty were not renewed. At a subsequent interview Mr. Cardwell did us the honour to submit the draft of a despatch to his Excellency the Governor-General, authorizing his Lordship to summon a Confederate Council upon commercial treaties, to be composed of representatives from the governments of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island. In response to the action of that Confederate Council, subsequently held under the auspices

of the Governor-General, arrangements were made to send deputations to the West India Islands and elsewhere for the purpose of opening up, if possible, new channels for trade, and meeting the emergency that might arise from the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty.

We placed the matter of the exaction of duties on our fishermen on the coast of Labrador in the strongest light possible, though I regret to say that the correspondence which is here detailed did not result as we would wish. There is no indisposition on the part of the Imperial Government to give effect to the views of this Legislature, but the Secretary of State has decided that the law under which the Government of Newfoundland has levied these duties having received the assent of Her Majesty, there is no power remaining in the hands of the Imperial Government enabling them to interfere with the matter; and the only course that under the circumstances remain to us is to test the question in the Courts of Law in Newfoundland, and then if necessary by appeal to the Privy Council. I have little doubt that such a course would prove the illegal character of this exaction.

We placed ourselves in communication with the International Contract Company in reference to the construction of the proposed line of railway. Having satisfied ourselves, by careful enquiry, of the ability of the Company to fulfil their engagements, we were extremely anxious to embrace the line to Annapolis, as well as that to New Brunswick, within the contract; but the obstacle interposed by the clause in our act providing for the construction of those lines, which authorizes the Government at any time forever to assume the ownership of the line, was so great that we were defeated in that object, and but for the combination of interest between the International Contract Company and a company in course of organization, with a large capital, for the purpose of opening the Spring Hill Coal Mines upon an extensive scale, we could not have effected a contract even for the Trunk line. In the course of those negotiations we found it necessary, for the purpose of promoting the construction of the Railway, and opening the mines, to assure the Hon. Mr. Dickey and J. Levisay, Esq., who represented some ten mining rights of search at Spring Hill, that the Government would give to the holders of those areas the fullest privileges consistent with the law and regulations relating to mines. I may here mention that a contract was simultaneously entered into between the representatives of the New Brunswick Government and the same company, for the extension of the line from the border of New Brunswick to Moncton. As the whole question of the contract is fully detailed in the papers before you, I shall merely draw your attention to the fact that there is one respect in which we consented to depart from the legislation of last session. I am sure, however, that our action will meet with the hearty concurrence of both sides of the House. We relinquished the right on the part of the government to capitalize the subvention, unless by mutual consent, and this Province has been relieved from the obligation to take £80,000 stg. of stock, authorized by the act,—six per cent. interest on that amount for twenty years being accepted as an equivalent