

England. But not one word did the hon. gentleman use about the advantages of this country to the overburdened classes of England; not one word did he say holding up in any way the advantages which Englishmen, our fellow-subjects, could gain by coming here and settling in our vast North-West. Oh, no; that would have been rather in contradiction to the speeches which he made so eloquently the other way, and which were considered so valuable that they were published by the land speculators of the United States with a very handsome frontispiece of the hon. gentleman. The hon. gentleman, as I have said, finding very little to remark upon in the Speech, said there was not much in it; but if you will look at the substance, you will see there is very little froth and a good deal of practical legislation in the Speech, if the hon. gentleman, or rather if the followers of the hon. gentleman can only persuade him to forget personalities and direct his great mind to legislation. He said we ought to have met earlier in the season. Well, we did put off meeting a little, there is no doubt, but then there are limits to human endurance. The persistence of hon. gentlemen opposite kept us here six months instead of three. Now, we are not all born with silver spoons in our mouths, some of us have business at home, and surely it was not too much, if we were kept six months from home, to get something like six months at home. But besides this, there was the hope of the expectation that the negotiations with the United States Government on the subject of a joint commission not only to look into the fishery matter, but to take up the larger question of reciprocal trade, might have made such progress between the 4th December and now as to enable us to enter into negotiations, to bring down early in the Session a measure based on those negotiations. Speaking of that commission, the hon. gentleman truly said I was never more surprised than last Session, when we were attacked for making that arrangement with the United States, and told there was no use in it. I think the hon. member for West Elgin (Mr. Casey) was particularly eloquent on that point.

Mr. CASEY. Hear, hear.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman says now that the moment the notice was given that the treaty was to be ended in two years, negotiations should have been commenced again. Sir, there is a degradation involved in that proposition, which will meet with the indignant objection and refusal of the people of Canada. Had not the Government before 1873, and had not the Government of 1874 gone to Washington, and almost on their knees asked for a renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty? Had we not perhaps compromised our dignity as a free people in doing what we did for the sake of commercial advantage? But the more we did, the more humbly we bent our heads, the more that with subdued eye and bated breath we prayed them to open their markets to us, the more contumeliously we were treated, and at last we were almost forced to the conviction that there was no use by degrading our manhood to try to get the United States to do what they were resolved not to do. And only fancy, there was the Congress of the United States; there was the Senate, a branch of the executive as well as of the legislative power, joined with the popular branch in giving notice to England that they must end that treaty. The notice was given and they must have meant something by it; and the moment they had solemnly stated that they would not have a treaty at any price, the moment that they had authorised the President to give notice to the sovereignty of England that they would not have it, fancy that, at that moment, we should have gone, without any hope or expectation of being able to succeed, to say to them: "You have given this notice; you do not mean it; take it back; agree to a treaty, and pay us five millions more." That was the suggestion made from the other side.

Some hon. MEMBERS. No.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Well, it was the suggestion made just now by the hon. gentleman who has just spoken.

Mr. BLAKE. No.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes; he said we should have attempted to renew the treaty the moment the notice was given. That is what he stated this very day, an hour ago, in the presence of the House; and only fancy our going to the Government that had accepted the denunciation of the treaty. The President, if he had chosen, might have refused to give effect to the resolution, but he did not do so; the executive and the legislative power combined in ending that treaty, and the folly and the meanness of our going to ask for what we could not reasonably expect to get was too obvious for a Tory Government, at all events, to countenance. And besides, do we not know that the whole hope of Mr. Blaine, the Secretary of State for the United States, to get elected lay in getting up a war feeling against England; do we not know how his own State of Maine was opposed to a renewal of the fishery treaty; how he had pinned his faith and his hopes of success in the presidential election upon the purely American, that is the anti-British feeling, that he was trying to pump up. And I can tell the hon. gentleman—it is no secret—that Her Majesty's Government as well as the Canadian Government thought it was the most inopportune time in the world to go to the United States to try, to make the futile attempt, to renew the treaty just before the presidential election, when each party was frightened of the other, when the Democratic party dared not declare that they were in favor of free trade or in favor of reciprocity. Why, both parties were so bound up in trying to prevent any expression or any resolution that would offend any great interest during the election that we were told, and we knew, we did not require to be told, that it would be worse than folly, it would be courting defeat to attempt to make any arrangement until after the election was over, and that then we could appeal with some hope to the powers that be, the powers that would be after the election. And so, Sir, the moment the new Government was formed we opened communications with the Government of the United States, and we did so in a manner which I think was in a great degree successful, for the early and favorable consideration, by the President and his advisers, of the proposition; and that was that we stated to them we wanted to be good neighbors; that the American fishermen were aware that the treaty was to end on a particular day, that they would be fitting out their vessels for the season's fishing in March or April, and they would find on the 2nd July that their vessels would be liable to be seized and their year's catch to be lost, and that would create such an irritation as to greatly endanger the pleasant relation which had existed for many years between the United States and Canada. The offer was a neighborly one; it was felt to be a neighborly one, and was warmly reciprocated by President Cleveland and the Secretary of State, Mr. Bayard; and the Government of the United States, the President and Secretary, have faithfully carried out their pledge to lay before Congress a pressing message, asking for the appointment of a joint commission, not only to settle the question of the fisheries, but to consider the much larger question of the development and increase of the international trade between Canada and the United States. It is no fault of the President; it is no fault of ours, that Congress or the Senate has apparently made up its mind that no commission shall be issued. It is no fault of ours, and I dare say it is a matter of regret to the President that his strong and urgent representation has met with the fate that it has. But the fact that it did so, the fact that, even