

I wish now to affirm that every word spoken by my hon. friend from North Norfolk is true, and I affirm as a fact, to which I challenge the contradiction of the hon. gentleman, that when Parliament was dissolved in 1891 by His Excellency upon the advice of the Canadian Government, they did it under a false pretense in the eyes of the Canadian people and with deceit in their mouth, by stating to the people of Canada that they were induced to dissolve Parliament because they had received from Mr. Blaine and the American authorities an invitation to negotiate a reciprocity treaty. Sir, the fact was that it was not Mr. Blaine or the American authorities who had sought for a conference with a view to reciprocity, but it was the Canadian Government who had sought for a conference at Washington with a view of obtaining a reciprocity treaty. Let me call the attention of the House to a state paper which was passed in the preceding month of December, and which was communicated to the press at the same time that the dissolution was announced. It was a Minute of Council, which read as follows:—

The Committee of the Privy Council having learned that the Honourable the Secretary of State for the United States had expressed to Her Majesty's Ministers at Washington his readiness to negotiate for a reciprocity treaty on a wide basis and particularly for the protection of the mackerel fisheries, and for the fisheries on inland waters, and had subsequently stated to Her Majesty's Minister his great desire to conclude a reciprocity treaty, they desire to take the opportunity afforded by these intimations from Mr. Blaine of suggesting the expediency of taking early steps to adjust the various matters that have arisen and now exist, affecting the relations of Canada with the United States.

Now, Sir, you have it in plain language; here is a state paper, a Minute of Council for which hon. gentlemen are responsible to this House, stating that it was Mr. Blaine who had invited a conference, that Mr. Blaine had manifested a great desire to have a reciprocity treaty. What was their object? It was simply as my hon. friend from North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) stated a few days ago, in order to convey the impression to the Canadian people that they would obtain a reciprocity treaty. They desired to make the Canadian people believe that the Canadian Government could obtain a reciprocity treaty, and that Mr. Blaine had manifested a great desire to have such a treaty. Yet, Sir, far from this being the case, when these gentlemen attempted some months ago to have a reciprocity conference at Washington, before they could enter into negotiations, Mr. Blaine wanted an explanation as to the extraordinary position in which he had been placed in the eyes of the Canadian people. Before he consented to receive the Canadian delegation, he addressed a letter to Sir Julian Pauncefote, in which he said:—

In view of the fact that you had come to the State Department with the proposals, and that the subject was then for the first time mentioned between us, and in view of the further fact that I agreed to a private

conference as explained in my Minute, I confess that it was a surprise to me when several weeks later during the Canadian canvass, Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper both stated before public assemblages that an informal discussion of a reciprocity treaty would take place at Washington after the 4th March, by the initiation of the Secretary of State.

Here we see Mr. Blaine protesting against the position in which he had been placed by the false representations which had been made to the Canadian public that he had sought for a reciprocity treaty. Now, Sir, upon this occasion, I put the question to the hon. gentleman: Which statement is true? Was it the statement of Mr. Blaine that it was not he who had sought for a conference, or was it the statement of hon. gentlemen that it was Mr. Blaine who had sought for a conference? Sir, upon this point we have the evidence of Sir Charles Tupper himself who went to Washington before he went to England, and going to Washington in order to have a conference, he was placed in the humiliating position that he had to confess that the impression which had been conveyed to the Canadian public was a false impression. We have a letter of Sir Charles Tupper, addressed to the late Sir John A. Macdonald, explaining his interview with Mr. Blaine, in which he said:

I told Mr. Blaine that I wished, in the outset, to recognize the accuracy of the statement contained in his letter to Sir Julian Pauncefote, which I had seen, in reference to the initiation of negotiations regarding reciprocal trade arrangements between the two countries.

The first thing which he had to do was to tell Mr. Blaine that what he had been stating in Canadian assemblies, that the impression which had been conveyed, was false, and he had to make a recantation before he could be heard. No man in the position of Mr. Blaine, having the respect, not only of his own nation, but the respect of himself, would have consented to treat with a man who had thus misrepresented him in the eyes of another nation, and so when the men who had made the false representation wished to treat with him at Washington, they first had to retract their statement. Now, I ask why was this humiliating falsehood resorted to? Simply to convey the impression to the Canadian people that the Canadian Minister could obtain a reciprocity treaty at Washington. Sir, this is the extent of the degradation to which a party can descend who wants to obtain power and retain it. We do not fight with such weapons. We have a legitimate ambition to obtain our share of public favour, but by such means we will never seek to raise ourselves. We will fight an honest and an open battle. Sir, power has no attraction for us if it has to be purchased at such a price, and at such a humiliation. Sir, the condition of the country is a grave one, but it is not a desperate one. That the people suffer is evidenced by their action, when, by thousands at a time, they leave the country for a foreign soil; by their action, when,