

ago, that he was perfectly well aware that there was no use, no chance, and no hope for negotiating a treaty for reciprocity in natural products with the United States. I repeat that if the hon. gentlemen are ready to include manufactured goods, if that is part of their policy—and without that it is idle and useless for them to go to Washington to discuss trade relations—then, Sir, how dare they presume to attack us, who from the first, seeing and knowing the necessity of this, have had the courage of our convictions, and have told the people of Canada that if they wished to have reciprocity with the United States they must perforce and by necessity include all United States manufactures. If the hon. gentlemen, at this present moment, find themselves in an unhappy position, if they find that the United States Government entertain very great distrust of their proposals, if they find that even their own supporters entertain a great distrust of their proposals, who on earth have they to blame, when hardly two of their own selves can be found at one and the same time making the same statement on this important question? I desire the House to consider the position. It is perfectly idle to imagine that we can stand still in our present situation; it is perfectly idle to imagine that we will be able to remain as we are now. One of two things is certain to occur: Either on the one hand you will have free trade with the United States, you will have free trade all over this continent, or, on the other hand, what Sir Charles Tupper has predicted is extremely likely to occur, and you will have, sooner or later, in one form or another, a practical suspension of intercourse between this country and the United States. We know well on what terms the first great boon can be obtained by the people of this country, and we have the right, I think, to ask a plain "yes" or "no." That is all we demand as to the policy of the Government of Canada on this question. There can be no doubt whatever, for it is plain to every man who has bestowed a second thought on the question—no man knows it better than the First Minister himself—that if you want to have free trade relations or extended trade relations with the United States you must be prepared to admit their manufactures free. Unless you are prepared and ready to do this it is worse than waste of time, it is merely exposing Canada to needless humiliation and disgrace to send messengers to Washington who are known to be predestined to fail. The manufacturers of this country—at any rate the protected manufacturers—know this just as well as we do, the Government know it, their parliamentary supporters know it, and it will be our business and our duty on the floor of Parliament, through the public press, on the hustings, and in every possible shape and way, to take care that from this time out the people of Canada are also made aware of the real facts of the case; that they shall know how, and how only, reciprocity with the United States can be obtained; that they shall know how, and how only, they can be relieved from the extreme pressure which is now being inflicted on many parts of the country by the injudicious McKinley tariff to which the hon. gentleman has alluded. I must say that I can conceive no reason nor no ground why hon. gentlemen should shift and evade on this question. Most assuredly they will not escape discussion in this House, most assuredly we will

take care that whether they like it or not so soon as the forms of this House will permit they will be compelled to make some sort of an explanation, they will be compelled to make some definition, if it only be a negative one, of their position on this question. They certainly will not conciliate the United States by their present conduct, nor will they conciliate their own followers. If the issue were one less important, if there were any less grave questions at stake, I would say that the whole position and attitude of the Government was simply a subject for ridicule, but as it is I must admit that it is a matter for profound regret to me, profound regret to every member of this House who cares for the dignity and honour of Canada, to see the position in which we have been placed by the lack of straightforwardness and the lack of statesmanship exhibited by these gentlemen. At this present moment there can be no doubt whatever that the position of our country in the eyes of the people of the United States is very far indeed from what it should be. Our self-respect is very gravely injured by such proceedings as these to which the hon. gentlemen have recently been parties. More than that, Sir, they did material injury to a cause which might, by proper management on their part, have been in a fair way to be redressed, and this injury is likely to be perpetuated for a very unnecessarily long time. So far as it is possible for us to judge, from their own recorded declarations, and from the statements they have made in various places throughout the country, what the Government are now doing is continually wavering and halting between two opinions. One day the High Commissioner gets the better of the situation and succeeds in persuading the Government to send envoys to Washington; the next day a representation from the "Red Parlour" convinces the First Minister that of two dangers or evils he had better choose what he considers the least, and continue to support those gentlemen to whom he owes his position here; and, finally, we find that when those hon. gentlemen do go down to Washington, they are to all intents and purposes denied an audience. We find that they are even told to go and learn their own mind, and within six months afterwards when they have made up their minds what they are going to propose, they may, perchance, be permitted to state it to the Secretary of State of the United States. I have never been blind, Sir, to the difficulties of carrying out such a measure as this; I know that they are neither few nor slight; but I am bound to say that however difficult the position may be, in my judgment it will be infinitely more difficult of remedy unless the Government of Canada are prepared to make up their mind to accept the only terms on which it is possible for them to obtain relief for the people of this country. One thing I must say, and that is this: If it were the object of the Government of Canada during the last five years to destroy all chance of a reasonable settlement or of making a fair treaty with the United States, I cannot conceive that they could have acted in any other way than they have done. I cannot conceive that they could have taken any other steps to prevent the people of the United States from accepting the propositions made by them other than they have seen fit to take. Twice, Sir, within the last four years, they have brought things to such a pass that we have been in imminent peril of seeing our inter-