

great danger to bring on a discussion of this kind, because in the discussion things may be said which may thwart in the future prospects of negotiations with the United States; speeches of individual members may be quoted, as the speech of Mr. Rice has been quoted, and they cannot know the comparative value of speeches here any more than we can know the comparative value of speeches made in Congress; and so statements made by any hon. member may thwart the chances of any negotiation with that Government.

Mr. WELDON. Mr. Rice occupies a very important position—chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes; but I remember when Mr. Sumner, a much more important man, was the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and yet, we met him on the Washington Treaty, and he was opposed to it from end to end, because he said that, if it were not carried, Canada must fall into the arms of the United States. It may be remembered that several questions were asked by hon. gentlemen opposite, as to when we were to bring down the papers on this subject, and that I stated from time to time that I was applying for leave to bring down some of the papers. I have applied for leave, and all I could get permission to bring down have been brought down. When I speak of asking permission, I mean permission to bring down papers which were international papers. There has been secret, unofficial correspondence between the two Governments, and we have had to get the consent of the American Government to some of the papers being brought down. I am, therefore, to a considerable degree, hampered in my freedom of statement, and in vindication of the course of the Government, by not getting that consent; but I have a general permission to state the general course of the negotiations. Now, Sir, the American Government had given notice that the treaty was to be ended. It would certainly have been childish and undignified to ask them to change their policy, unless we had a good reason to give them. Then the other question was, that of reciprocal trade relations, which, though not the same subject, might still be a cognate subject, and it was of considerable importance to Canada to mingle the two subjects, and try, by using one as a lever, to introduce the other. Now as regards an application to the late Government on the fishery question, any man who knows anything about American politics must know how futile that would have been. True, President Arthur, as a mere flourish, put a sentence in his Message, which was not regarded, but we knew perfectly well that Mr. Blaine, who, as Secretary of State, at that time covered the Foreign Affairs of the United States, was strongly opposed to any concession about the fisheries.

Mr. MILLS. Blaine went out on Garfield's death.

Mr. MITCHELL. Not immediately.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Mr. Blaine was a candidate for the Presidency; he was supported by the whole Republican party; Mr. Blaine was the nominee of the President, as far as the President can have a nominee, and Mr. Blaine was the head and front of the protectionist party in the United States, and he was hoping and trusting to get his election by keeping up protection in the United States, and by keeping out the products of all the world, Canada excluded, from the American market. Not only that, Sir, but when Mr. Frelinghuysen was Secretary of State—Mr. Frelinghuysen was a gentleman for whom I had a great respect when he was alive, and I have a great respect for his memory now, because I had the honor of considering him one of my best friends. But he was a protectionist to the utmost extent; he was resolved to keep the United States trade for the United States people; and, Sir, in the spring or summer of 1884 he had, in answer to a deputation from the Gloucester fishermen, solemnly declared that the Government of the United States would adhere to the ter-

mination of the treaty, and that under no circumstances would that treaty be renewed. That statement was known, and we knew that it was of no use to go to the United States Government, or to the United States Congress, and ask them either to withdraw the cancellation of the treaty, or to enter into negotiations for a reciprocal treaty; it was useless, it was folly, it was humiliation, without even the reward that humiliation sometimes has, of getting "the dirty shilling." We could not get the shilling, and we might have the humiliation. The question, therefore, stood in that way. But as it occurred to us last autumn that we might, perhaps, incidentally, insert a wedge, and during the administration of President Arthur and the administration of the Foreign Affairs by Mr. Frelinghuysen—I think I am at liberty to say this: Mr. Frelinghuysen is dead, and we cannot get his consent, of course, to the correspondence, but I am at liberty to state the general results. We knew perfectly well that if we stated that we wanted the fisheries treaty to be renewed, that we wanted a treaty of commercial reciprocity, that there was no use in trying; but it occurred to us that we might put the matter to that Government—not the present Government of the United States, but to that Government—we might say to them: Well, the treaty will end 1st July, 1885; that is, in the middle of the fishing season. Your men will be fitting out vessels, and we cannot expect that those rude fishermen may know everything, and may know when the treaty ends. They are fitting up their vessels, and if they are in our waters up to the 1st of July, it will cause them great irritation if their vessels are seized on the 2nd day of July. We took that as a means of opening the subject. We did it, I think, in a diplomatic way, so as not to ensure either a refusal on the part of the Americans or to cause any embarrassment on either side. Unofficial communications were conveyed through Mr. West, and he asked Mr. Frelinghuysen whether there was any use in our going into the subject, in our asking for a reconsideration of the fishery matters—whether there was any use in making an official proposition, or any use in talking about reciprocity arrangements. The general result was that Mr. Frelinghuysen stated that it was impossible, and that all he could do, or that the Government of the United States could do, was, just prior to the 1st of July, to issue a proclamation, warning the American fishermen to avoid coming into our waters. We accepted that answer, because we knew from the previous statements of Mr. Frelinghuysen that there was little or no use in entering into negotiations. I think the hon. gentleman quoted from the Governor General's statement in his despatch, that perhaps we would have a better chance under the incoming Government, who have four years before them, rather than the outgoing Government, in going into negotiations with them. The moment that we knew a new Government was formed, we set to work. The British Ambassador drew the attention to it of Mr. Bayard, the present Secretary of State, and, of course, the Minister who is in charge of the Foreign Relations of the American Government—we called his attention to the previous unofficial correspondence with Mr. Frelinghuysen, and from that it grew by degrees from a quite confidential and unofficial series of letters—all of which, of course, we saw here, and all of which we weighed—until it arrived at the unexpectedly happy result we now find in these letters, in which, so far as the present Government of the United States is concerned, we have now the expression of their desire, in the first place, to deal with the fishery question, and, in the second place, to enter upon the great subject of the extension and development of trade between the two countries. Sir, at the time that we commenced these negotiations I never thought we would have got so far; I never really thought we would have got the Americans to take a step towards what we all reasonably desired—although we did not pray for it; we will not pray for it; we will not say it