

merchants to compete at all with the United States. On that occasion the Minister of Finance replied to me as follows :

"I may say to the hon. gentleman who has moved this resolution, that early after the return of the High Commissioner to London, he was instructed by the Government to take certain steps with a view to securing the same advantages to Canada as were secured to the United States by the treaty referred to. Instructions were given to him to make certain propositions. If those failed, he was to make other propositions. Correspondence was entered into between the High Commissioner and the Imperial Government, and it was settled that he was to act in conjunction with the British Minister in Spain, in negotiating a treaty of this kind. It was stated at the time the treaty was made that a more extended treaty would likely be arranged between Spain and the United States during the summer. It was found that negotiations of a much more extended character were being prosecuted between the representative of the United States and the Spanish Government. It was found desirable—in fact our High Commissioner was communicated with—to say that understanding, as we did, unfortunately, through the Imperial Government, through the foreign office, that the negotiations, the proposals to cover the ground of the treaty to which the hon. gentleman referred, would not be sufficient to meet the larger ground through the negotiations which were going on. Under these circumstances he waited until the larger treaty was agreed upon, and then he was instructed to put himself in communication with the foreign office, and the foreign office with the Government of Spain. The answer of the Spanish Government was, that they declined to enter into further negotiations with the representative of the Government of Canada until the decision of the Senate of the United States was known, as to the other treaty; and therefore the matter stands in that position until the action of the Senate is known. I might state that it would not be in the public interest to say what instructions were given to Sir Charles Tupper to cover the ground of the original treaty. If the treaty made is ratified the Government will probably be in a position to give decided instructions to the High Commissioner in the larger and more important question. The Government think it would not be in the interests of the public to state exactly what the instructions were or to bring down the papers which would show exactly what we propose in the first place, and then as an alternative proposition."

Now another year has passed, and, as far as I know, it seems that no progress has been made; at all events, we have never been told that any progress has been made. We were told in 1884 that certain negotiations were going on, and that the papers could not be brought down. In 1885 we were told that the correspondence was still going on, and that certain instructions had been issued, but that nothing could be done until it was decided by the United States Senate whether the enlarged treaty which had been entered into early last spring between Spain and the United States would be confirmed. Now, nearly a year has elapsed since the Senate of the United States refused to ratify that treaty, and of course, nothing was done. But the flag treaty, which affects us really more than the more extended treaty would if it had been carried into effect, is still in existence, and I hope that the Government, having had two years now to consider this question, to carry on correspondence with the British Government and point out the difficulties under which our commercial men labor under this arrangement between Spain and the United States, will be in a position to tell me that they have made such progress that in a very short time our merchants will be placed on the same footing as the United States merchants are at the present time. I shall not make any further remarks until I hear the reply of the Government.

Mr. STAIRS. I am sure the hon. member for Digby (Mr. Vail) in bringing this motion to the notice of the House and by the remarks which he made, has not in any way over-estimated the disadvantages under which the trade of Canada, and particularly the Maritime Provinces, now labors in regard to the trade with Cuba and Porto Rico on account of the flag treaty between the United States and Spain, to which he has referred. It is certainly to be desired that all possible means should be taken by the Government of Canada to secure from the Imperial Government equal concessions to our trade. But I must say that I do not see how the remarks of the hon. gentleman are in point in this connection. The only object he can have in introducing this subject in this way must be to endeavor to cast some blame on the Government for not doing more

than he thinks they have done. I am quite confident that the members of the Dominion Government acknowledge and recognise as fully as he does the importance of this question to the trade of Canada, and are prepared to do everything they possibly can to secure for us equal advantages with the United States. I can state that the more confidently because the hon. gentleman himself in his remarks a few moments ago referred to the efforts which the Government have been making during the past few years to secure for Canada equal advantages, by sending their High Commissioner in London to Spain, to endeavor to secure these advantages. But the difficulty is, Mr. Speaker—and I think the hon. gentleman has hardly been fair in bringing this question before the House in the way he has brought it, without acknowledging that difficulty—the difficulty is that the question rests not with the Dominion Government, but that in order to get a fair settlement of it we must go to the Government of Spain, and if they refuse to enter into treaty negotiations with the Imperial Government to give us these advantages, what more can the Government of Canada do? I was not a little surprised at the hon. gentleman, in the first part of his remarks, stating that the Government of Spain gave these concessions to the United States because the United States gave up 10 per cent. additional duty which they had imposed on products from Porto Rico and Cuba; and I would ask the hon. gentleman if he would advocate our imposing an extra 10 per cent. on Cuba and Porto Rico products, simply that we might have the privilege of taking it off again, and thereby induce the Government of Spain to give us that advantage. Does he think such a dodge as that would be at all likely to succeed.

Mr. KIRK. Just what was done with the National Policy in the United States.

Mr. STAIRS. I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon; I do not think the cases are the same at all. Now, I think the hon. member for Digby would have done the Government more service if he had shown the Government and the House how it is possible to induce Spain to give us this treaty. Although he has not stated any good reasons which we could use to induce Spain to give us this treaty, still I am not without hope that this question will be satisfactorily settled. I would impress on the Government the importance to our trade and the trade of the whole country of the relations between Canada and the Spanish West Indies. I myself feel its importance, and I may, on a future occasion, bring it more prominently before the notice of the House and the country.

Mr. McLELAN. There is no objection to bringing down all the papers that can properly be laid before Parliament. The hon. member for Digby, who moves in this matter, speaks as if the whole case rested with the Canadian Government. No doubt it is a great disadvantage to the merchants of the Maritime Provinces not to be able to trade with the Spanish West Indies on the same terms as the merchants of the United States. The hon. gentleman forgets that the United States are able to offer greater inducements to Spain for a treaty than the Dominion of Canada, as their markets are very much larger than ours. He speaks as if we had nothing more to do than to demand a treaty. We have been in communication with Spain for a number of years. I think Sir Alexander Galt commenced the negotiations during the time he was High Commissioner, and whenever the temper of the Spanish mind seems to be such as to offer the least inducement to our High Commissioner in London to strike for a treaty, he is there, prepared and watching and anxious to do so; but to take the ground that all we have to do is to demand a treaty from Spain is not the proper one. The papers will be brought down.