

The Government's Motion

In the Legislature at Toronto, on Thursday, March 9th, 1911, Sir James Whitney, Prime Minister of Ontario, spoke to and moved the adoption of the following motion condemnatory of the reciprocity proposals between Canada and the United States:

- “That, in the opinion of this House, the interests of the Province of Ontario would, without doubt, be injuriously affected should the proposed Reciprocity Agreement between Canada and the United States of America come into force;
- “That this House, representing the people of Ontario, should not remain silent when a matter of such vital importance to the Province is being discussed, but should clearly state its attitude with respect thereto;
- “Therefore, be it resolved, That this House deprecates the making of said agreement and hereby records its strong dissent therefrom for the following reasons:—
- “That Canada is now enjoying a period of unexampled prosperity, her trade is expanding in all directions, her population is rapidly increasing, her ability, if unhampered by agreements, to work out her own destiny as a part of the great British Empire is beyond dispute, and her people are prosperous and contented. This is the result of the policy which has been pursued in the development of her trade and resources, and which has involved great sacrifice: on the part of her people and the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars upon transportation facilities between the various Provinces, and between Canada and the Empire.
- “That the determination of her people to carve out their own destiny and achieve nationhood as one of the component parts of the British Empire has justified this policy and is itself justified by the result.
- “That Canada's tide of prosperity and contentment is still rising, and her position and influence as an essential part of a consolidated Empire are becoming more assured. No arrangement with a foreign state should be considered which might even jeopardize the continuance of her present satisfactory condition, much less this agreement for reciprocity with the United States of America, negotiated in secret and without authority from her people, which, if made effective, would, in the opinion of this House, to a large extent, reverse the policy which has brought Canada to her present enviable position, would cause widespread and revolutionary disturbance in her business, would curtail and hamper her freedom in developing her own resources in her own way, would cause serious injury to many industries, and to Canada as a whole would check the growth and development of trade between the various parts of Canada with each other and between Canada and the Empire, would result in commercial union with the United States, would weaken Canada's position and influence as a unit in the British Empire, would frustrate her hopes of nationhood within the Empire, and would lead to political union with the United States.”