

Therefore, trifling interests will receive trifling attention, no matter by whom presented. It is not a question of influence, not a question of favor, not a question of affection, but a question of business; and the question between business people is what business can we do with you and on what terms can we do it, and even though our interests were trifling, which I deny, the respect paid would not be affected by the manner in which those interests were presented. Once again, it is said the United Kingdom would not go to war to enforce the provision of any treaty that might be made. I do not believe they would; I do not hope they would, and I think at this time, at this period in the world's history it is preposterous to think that sensible people would go to war in order to keep their trade. The smallest war would create a greater interruption of the most restricted relations between two civilized countries than the breach of any treaty, and we find applying more and more, at least to business matters, and I hope more and more, extending beyond business matters, and into those affairs which more arouse the feeling of pride and passion of the overpowering sense of importance, which still exists amongst States, though they have largely vanished amongst individuals—a better feeling, and that more and more we will scorn to believe that for such treaties as this at any rate, we have the best safeguard of their maintenance in the sense of honor and of justice of civilized nations, and general public opinion throughout the civilized and Christian world. I do not believe that for the breach of any commercial treaty made by England to France, or any other country in which her interests were involved, though that breach were wanton, that she would go to war. And further, it is suggested that we cannot have the guns and fleet of England to maintain amicable trade relations. I pass this point by as too ridiculous to demand further answer. It is said that we cannot have the benefit of the diplomatic service of England. Much good it has done us, Mr. Speaker. The history of the diplomatic service of England, as far as Canada is concerned, has been a history of error, blunder, wrong and concession. It is certainly not a history which would lead us to believe the service was specially valuable to us. The diplomatists of these modern times who have been most successful in matters of business have been those who were most conversant with the matter in hand, who knew best the needs, the wants, the capabilities, the resources of the country and the details of the question. Business men dealing with business questions are most successful. Mr. Cobden, who conducted the negotiations which resulted in the treaty between France and England, stepped into the position without the slightest previous training. The wisest, best and most acute of diplomatists, if only crammed sufficiently, will make a miserable failure, compared with a man of even less ability, born to the soil and thoroughly familiar with the details of the matter in which he is concerned. But we should not lose the benefit of the diplomatic service of England. We could ask for it when we want it, and when we think our interests are concerned. Again, it is said it would cost a great deal to maintain a useless staff of ambassadors and consuls. This is ridiculous, because our present system could be continued by which we would send an envoy where we want him, and when we think we are justified by the favorable result. As to having, in consequence of this, consuls and permanent ambassadors at foreign capitals, that is quite out of the question. It does not follow because you negotiate a treaty from time to time, a treaty which in its essence is one enduring for some years, that you should have any representative at a foreign capital pending the existence of the treaty; and if the arrangement be by mutual legislation, it is only when some proposals are made of change that the question of negotiation would arise. Then it is said that this is practically a separation from the Empire. I deny

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that with equal strength. To-day, as I have pointed out, we make laws to accomplish this result. To-day we have on the Statute-book a law which would enable us, to-morrow, if the United States Congress would pass a certain provision, to alter our fiscal system entirely by order of the Governor in Council, in order to get better trade relations with them. To-day we have laws which would enable us to reduce the duties on articles we import from France and Spain, if the French Government or the Spanish Government made laws or other provisions reducing the duties on certain other articles in which we trade with them. To-day, therefore, this latter is in such a position that all that is required is the intermediary, the negotiatory, to bring what we want into practical execution, by whom this foreign Government will be induced to do that thing which by our Statute we have said we would induce them to do, by which, without the intervention of the British Government at all, we could at once reduce our Customs duties. Then it is said the interests of England might be prejudiced by our acting. Not at all; I cannot see how that might be. Her interests are that the duties should be reduced; her advantages and interests are that we should arrange our fiscal system as best suits ourselves. If she has—which I do not believe—selfish interests, I deny that she has the right to judge between us and her on the subject of our selfish interests; I deny that she has the right to decide any more than we have the right to decide, and I maintain that by the law, by the constitution, by the amount of practical self-government which has been accorded to us, we have the right to decide for ourselves what our rate of duty shall be—and that is the whole of this question. We decide for what reason we shall lower duties or elevate duties, and our reasons do not concern any other people than ourselves. We determine to lower or to heighten—we determine to lower in order to attain a certain object, namely, to obtain concessions from other States as to the admission of our products; we determine to heighten for the protection of our products against theirs. We do this without the interference of England, maintaining our right to do so, although England may entirely differ from our policy, may deem it unjust and unfair, may deem that it operates harshly and injuriously on her trade with us. But it may be said that there will be a direct negotiation with a foreign power. Yes, but by the Queen of this country, and our Acts by the advice of the Privy Council of this country. But that is a mere question of form; the question of substance is the direct conduct of the negotiation; and I propose, as sound principle demands—as is done and as ought to be done I believe in all treaties, as is done in almost all commercial treaties, as was done in the Reciprocity Treaty, as was done in the Treaty of Washington, as is done in the Tariff arrangements with France, Spain, and Italy, as was proposed by the hon. Minister of Finance to be done in case Sir Alexander Galt succeeded in negotiating a treaty with France, the hon. Minister saying that the negotiation was necessarily subject to submission to and ratification by the Parliament of Canada—I propose that our commercial arrangements ought to be, in that sense, made subject either to the prior assent or the subsequent ratification of the Parliament of Canada by an Act. Such an Act would be, like all other Acts, subject to disallowance. There would be the safe measure of authority, whether substantial and real, or technical and formal, in respect to that matter as in respect to other matters in which we pass Acts of Parliament; and if it were thought fit by those in power to take the responsibility, they would have the power of nullifying the arrangements by disallowing the Act. I believe that by proceeding in this direction, we shall be taking a practical step towards obtaining that which the country wants—towards obtaining an extension of our commercial regulations; we shall be taking a practical business step in addi-