

dilatoriness in neglecting to attend to this matter. They were warned by the British Government in 1883, their attention was called to it in 1884, on the floor of the House, but they left the matter to the last moment. If the Government had said they had made every effort by negotiation, and had brought down correspondence to show they had made attempts to get that treaty renewed, which is of such great importance to the Maritime Provinces, and if they had made vigorous efforts to protect our fisheries, we would have had nothing to say, and the American fishermen, if inconvenienced, could only lay the blame at the door of their own Government; but the Government allowed matters to drift on in this way without doing anything. We have already seen that the great harvest lands of the west have been laid open to waste and desolation through the supineness of the Government; we now see the great harvest of the ocean being surrendered to the Americans. Great dissatisfaction exists in the Maritime Provinces with the conduct of the Government; but, so far as the Maritime Provinces are concerned, they are loyal. No standard of rebellion will ever be raised there; they are descendants of loyalists, and true to their country, but there is no doubt great dissatisfaction exists, and this course of the Government will tend to make the seeds of dissatisfaction deepen into discontent, and a desire to sever from the Union, and cause many to leave the home and flag under which they live, to seek in a foreign country for those privileges denied them in their own.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The Government have been charged with a great many things, but I thought we might, at all events, get some confidence from the Opposition on this subject. On this question, at all events, we have been guilty of no laxity; on this question we have succeeded, almost hoping against hope, in getting the American Government to agree, in the first place, to have a joint committee to settle the fisheries questions, and then to go into negotiations for a reciprocity treaty. The hon. gentleman seems to suppose that we can do as we like, that we can choose the right time, and that, whenever we like to make advances to the American Government, they must yield, and that we are guilty of laches because we did not, in 1883, two years ago, go to the American Government with cap in hand and on bended knee and ask them to withdraw their resolutions. Now, the United States is a great nation. There are two branches of the Legislature, and, with the sanction of their President they came to a solemn decision—and they had a right to come to that decision—to give two years' notice to put an end to the fishery clauses of the Washington Treaty. They had a right to do that. True, they did not give their reasons for doing it, but they did it. True, as the hon. gentleman says, Mr. Rice, a member in the Senate or House of Representatives, I do not know which, made a speech. Well, the hon. gentleman made a speech, but that is not a matter between the two nations. All the two nations could know was that the United States gave a notice that the fishery clauses were to be put an end to on the expiration of the two years. We could not help that. We were sorry for it. We would have preferred that they should have been continued, that they should fish in our waters and we should fish in theirs, that we should have free fish and free fishing, and that, at some convenient time, there should be another arbitration, to decide what were the equivalents to be paid to us for the superiority of our fisheries over theirs. But they gave their notice, and when were we to remonstrate? The hon. gentleman says we were too tardy. Were we to go to them the day after, or the week after, or the month after they gave the notice? Great nations are not to be treated in that way. It would have been only courting a repulse; it would have been only courting a snub, to use a familiar but effective word, for us to say: True, as a matter of national policy the executive and

Mr. WELDON.

legislative powers have united in putting an end to the fishery articles; but we beg of you not to do so; we beg that you will not do so. We might expect the answer. But the hon. gentleman says that a favorable disposition was shown by President Arthur, and we might have, perhaps, commenced negotiations then. Well, President Arthur put in a paragraph, as President Grant had on a previous occasion put a paragraph into his Message, recommending to the consideration of Congress the question of a reciprocity treaty; but we know what was the result on both of these occasions. President Grant sent down a memorandum, which was settled through the intervention of Mr. Brown, who was appointed by the late Government and who battled energetically and ably in favor of it, and produced some able papers on the subject, but they contumeliously turned their back upon him and took no notice of the matter.

Mr. MACKENZIE. They did not exactly turn their back upon it.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. They did nothing.

Mr. MACKENZIE. There were only three days left to the close of the Session, and they put it off to the next Session.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. And in the next Session they did not take it up.

Mr. MACKENZIE. No.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Exactly. President Arthur put in a paragraph which the hon. gentleman has quoted, saying that, as the fishery articles have ended, perhaps there might be an opportunity of arriving at reciprocal relations. That was not three days before Congress rose; that was at the opening of the Session; but no notice whatever was taken of it; not a speech was made on it; not a motion was made about it, either by the influence of the President or his Cabinet, or by any of the friends of the Cabinet or of those who were in favor of reciprocity; not a motion was made in any way to encourage reciprocity. They passed it by with contumelious silence. We had to accept the situation. We knew that we could live without reciprocity; we knew that we could not help the termination of the fishery articles; we knew that we would have to return, if the Americans so pleased, to the condition of things which existed between 1854 and 1871; we knew that we had stood it from 1854 to 1871, and that we could stand it again. There was no single day or hour or month in which the Government, with any prospect of success, could go to the United States and ask them: Will you alter your whole policy and allow the fishery treaty to be renewed; will you allow another arbitration to be taken, as to the superior value of our fisheries, in order to allow us another chance of getting five millions and a-half out of you; will you change your policy at our request, and leave things as they were before? It is too childish; such a course would be puerile, would be unworthy of any Government, would be unworthy of any Executive which has any respect for itself, and could have no result but certain failure. The Government may be pardoned for going very far indeed for the purpose of gaining a material advantage, but when the fact of going and beseeching and praying for it was the very way to defeat your object, there was no use in causelessly, uselessly and purposelessly abandoning the dignified position of saying: We had a treaty; we liked that treaty and would have liked to continue it; you have chosen to end it; good-bye; we can do without it. But I say it is a very great pity that the hon. gentleman has chosen to bring the matter up now. I must do him the justice to say that his speech is not, in my opinion, whatever that may be worth, harmful to the discussion of this matter with the United States, but it is a