

Derby, who, in turn, must be asked to communicate with the French Government. In fact, he intimated to the deputation that a circumlocution office must be opened, and most politely bowed them out. But again a necessity arose. Quebec East must be won; the hon. gentleman the Minister of Inland Revenue must be elected. So down there comes a letter from the Premier to my dear friend Alderman Shehyn, who had met with the refusal I have mentioned, which he writes that some good and no harm might be done by his going to the French Consul, and trying to open communications with him with a view to an arrangement with the French Government for the reduction of rates upon Canadian ships entering their ports. That was on the 5th November, just as the election was coming on. It could not be heard of in August. It must be done through Lord Carnarvon and Earl Derby, and those connected with the Government of France; but in November the election was coming on, and so Alderman Shehyn was told to go and see the French Consul and make an informal arrangement.

MR. MACKENZIE: Read that letter.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: I will read the letter, which is very striking. The hon. the Premier wrote:

"As you seem to think that some arrangement or understanding may be arrived at, though not formally concluded, with the French Consul, I need hardly say that I would be very glad indeed to have you communicate with that gentleman in any way you think best, and if anything can be done through him to facilitate the object we all have in view, to secure close commercial relations with France in articles produced by both countries, I shall be very glad."

That had not occurred to the hon. Premier when Mr. Shehyn came to Ottawa in August. The hon. the Premier did not say "Go to France, and if you cannot make a treaty make a basis—a preliminary, as they talk of it in Turkey just now—for a preliminary treaty." He did not say, "You send your suggestions to me, and I will send them to Lord Carnarvon, who will send them to Lord Derby, and they will go to Paris, and they will do

something like what you suggest." He did not see it in that light then. He did not so see it until his spectacles were rubbed by the handkerchief sent by the hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue, who would say, "There must be some way of doing it; I must be elected." I was saying that I hope the Bill for better securing the independence of Parliament may include a definite, strong and specific clause, prohibiting anything like Government influence at elections, or the Government finding out, at any particular moment, that any particular policy was best at the time; this should be met by a clause that no Minister who has just been sworn in, and could not possibly know the policy of the Government, should state in more than dubious terms that a certain policy would be carried out—for example, with respect to the repeal of the Insolvency Act. I think a clause of that kind would be of great service, and would protect the people against that sort of influence which is more dangerous—specimens of which we have seen at Quebec and Halifax—than the buying up of individual votes by candidates. There is a clause in the Address respecting some alteration in the Departments, the merits of which will depend on the terms of the measure introduced. Another clause states that is very desirable there should be uniform legislation in all the Provinces respecting the traffic in spirituous liquors. I am very glad the Government is going to bring the subject up before the House. It is a subject of the utmost importance and should be treated with due consideration of all the difficulties which surround the question. I hope the hon. the Premier will overcome all these difficulties, and I hope that he will not be deterred from carrying out any views on the subject at which he may arrive, by the hon. member for West Middlesex (Mr. Ross). I hope that the hon. the Premier will have the opportunity now, and will embrace the opportunity,—he has embraced the opportunity, but I hope he will see it carried out, and that he will not allow the hon. member for West Middlesex, as he has been doing for the last two Sessions whenever any