

tion with the United States, is so keen that a due sense of what is necessary in England's interests will deter her public men from saddling upon her people this or any additional burden in the shape of a tax upon raw material represented in the shape of a tax upon bread. We had better dismiss our dreams in this regard, our hopes of realizing what is impossible, and let the preferential question drop. It will drop in my opinion, for under the conditions of trade as they exist, I believe that we can never realize it. The present preference is purely sentimental, it is a sentiment that is not convertible into current coin. We have not even been able, in return for this sentimental preference, to get the cattle embargo removed. We have not the slightest concession granted to us in return for the preference of 33½ per cent; and its one only good effect, if it has a good effect at all, is that it lessens the burden of customs taxation upon certain lines of imports.

I should not, Mr. Speaker, follow to-day the example of the hon. gentleman who spoke last night, and enter upon an extended discussion of the question of protection. I do not think that at this juncture in our public affairs a discussion of that question as an abstract theory will have practical results, because it is nothing more than academic in reality. As I said before, we have the decision on the part of the government to let the matter of revision of our tariff stand over until we know what developments will take place, what the conditions will be when we are called upon to act. That being the case, it is unnecessary, and a waste of time, in my opinion, to enter upon a free discussion of the principles of protection versus free trade or a revenue tariff policy.

I shall have something to say, Mr. Speaker, with your permission, upon the question of reciprocity with the United States. That question has filled a large place in the history of Canadian fiscal discussions, since long before confederation and down to the present time. The desire for closer trade relations led to a treaty securing for us reciprocity in natural products away back in 1854. We enjoyed the benefits that resulted from that treaty until 1866. It was then abrogated. We know, those of us who will take the pains to look up the history of Canada during that period, what the practical result of reciprocity was so far as it affected the interests of Canada. We might draw from the experience of that period lessons as to what would be a probable result of a similar line of policy if entered upon again. And so satisfied, in the opinion of the Canadian public, was the result of that period of reciprocity that Canada has earnestly sought for a renewal of that condition of affairs for many years since then. We sought strenuously to avert the abrogation of the treaty in 1866. Embassies from this country visited Washington a few months after the treaty was ab-

rogated. After the Liberal party came into power in 1874, one of its first acts was to despatch a commissioner, Hon. George Brown, to Washington, who, in conjunction with Lord Thornton, the British minister, negotiated with the State Department a reciprocity treaty which was not ratified by the Senate. Various other attempts were made, and we have only been debarred of late years from making these attempts by the apparent hopelessness of the efforts which have been put forth. The question is one which has sunk somewhat in public estimation as to its importance for the last two or three years, but it is a question which is as important to-day to Canada, perhaps, as it ever has been. It is a question which has probably to receive again the consideration of the government of this country, and the consideration of the government of the United States, and if it does receive that consideration, it will do so under circumstances, in my opinion, more conducive to a favourable result than have existed since the abrogation of the treaty in 1866. The hon. leader of the opposition, in his speech a day or two ago, asked the reason of the enormous expansion of American imports. Well, the reason is quite obvious. We have maintained a moderate tariff policy towards the United States and the rest of the world ever since this Commonwealth, or Dominion, came into existence. Our duties have from time to time been advanced, but they are still at a moderate rate, at a rate which does not materially impede importation from the United States or any other country, at a rate which, of course, has afforded some protection, which has led to the development of large manufacturing interests, but still at a rate which is not at all a prohibitive rate, under which imports may steadily increase from the outside world, and under which they have steadily increased. Now, our frontier stretches alongside of the United States for 4,000 miles. The people of the United States are our neighbours. They have a very thoroughly developed manufacturing system, the most extensive in the world. Although England exports more manufactured goods, the supply of the domestic market of the United States amounts to much more than the total manufactures of Great Britain. They have an enormous manufacturing interest, and they have reached the point where they are capable of supplying their own requirements, and have a large surplus available for export. Now, necessarily, they are seeking foreign markets. Their conditions as to soil and climate and as to the wants of the people are similar to our own, and they have succeeded in making a long list of articles which exactly suit our wants and which cannot very well be obtained elsewhere. The facility for getting goods there is so much greater than across the ocean that this in itself would act very powerfully in the direction of securing the trade to them.