

I seconded, which I supported, which I honestly believed in when I supported it, and with the principles of which I am strongly in accord to-night. There are two matters referred to in the amendment now before us which were not included in the Oliver resolution. The first is a declaration that the Reciprocity Agreement of 1911 should be brought into force by the Parliament of Canada at the present time in order that we might have the advantages of it.

Let me say, Sir, that there was no man in Canada who honestly believed in the virtues of the Reciprocity Agreement of 1911 to a greater extent than I did. There has never been anything in my whole political experience which I viewed so favourably from the economic standpoint—which I believed would be to the advantage of the great majority of the people of Canada—as I did the Reciprocity Agreement. I have not changed my mind one jot or tittle down to the present day, and the greatest regret of my life—not from any personal feelings, but from the standpoint of the public—was that the Reciprocity Agreement of 1911 was not sustained by the people at the polls. I am, however, unable to agree with my friend that any very great good would come by the adoption of the Reciprocity Agreement by this Parliament at the present time, for the simple reason that practically everything which the Reciprocity Agreement grants to the people of Canada has already been obtained, either by the action of the United States Congress, or by the action of the Canadian Government during the last three or four years. Lumber has been made free. That means a tremendous amount to the eastern portions of Canada, and I believe to some extent as well to the western portions of the Dominion. Fresh fish have been made free, which must be a tremendous gain, I know it is in fact, to the people of Eastern Canada. A great proportion of the agricultural products of Canada are free into the United States. Cement has been made free, boots and shoes are free; and practically, as I said before, everything which is produced in large quantities, and which means a great deal to the industries and the producers of Canada, now goes into the United States free of duty. There are, it is true, a great many small items, referred to by my hon. friend from Brome (Mr. McMaster) this afternoon, which are not free, but they play a very small part in the general trade of the country.

In addition to the articles which have been made free by the United States Congress, wheat and wheat products, or the

great majority of them, have been made free by the action of this Government. The same thing can be said of potatoes, due, of course, to taking advantage of the provisions of the recent United States tariff. My reason for saying that the adoption of this policy would not be of very much value to Canada at the present time is, that I always contended that the reciprocity arrangement was not a treaty, but was simply an agreement by which like tariffs should be adopted by the two countries on a certain list of articles. It is well known that a change has taken place in the political complexion of the Congress of the United States during the past three or four months. What course the new Congress may take I do not know; but I am sure that any action which this Government or this Parliament may take to-night would have no influence whatever upon the action which the United States Congress may take when it meets, some time probably in the month of May.

I am not going to-night over all the ancient history in regard to this question, but I do feel that I ought to read one extract from the letter written by the two gentlemen who negotiated the treaty on the part of Canada in 1911, to show that this was not a treaty, but simply an agreement that certain tariff reciprocal arrangements should be provided by the two countries. I am going to take the liberty of doing that because it seems to me it goes to the very pith, the very heart, of the proposal of my hon. friend as embodied in the amendment which he has submitted. I am reading now from the letter, dated 21st January, 1911, signed by W. S. Fielding and William Paterson, in accepting the proposal of the United States Government as contained in a memorandum of the American Secretary of State to them. I will read one paragraph from that letter, to show what was the real intention of the document. It is to be found at page 2457 of Hansard, 1911:

Nevertheless, it is distinctly understood that we do not attempt to bind for the future the action of the United States Congress or the Parliament of Canada, but that each of these authorities shall be absolutely free to make any change of tariff policy or of any other matter covered by the present arrangement, that may be deemed expedient.

With that understanding, and with the changed conditions that have taken place in the United States, I can see no very great good in the Parliament of Canada, after nearly eight years have gone by, attempting to adopt the provisions of that agreement, and therefore I have no hesita-