

England seems deadlier to-day than the Wool Bill he recently vetoed. Canada did it.

This pithy sentence shows to us all that there may be in the rejection of this agreement far worse consequences than had been dreamed of by my hon. friend.

Mr. FOSTER. May I ask my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) if he endorses that statement?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. My hon. friend (Mr. Foster) knows that I stated in the manifesto which I issued to the Canadian people that reciprocity would help the passage of the arbitration treaty. My opinion is here confirmed. And I stated a moment ago that the Canadian people, while, in my judgment, they took a wrong course, yet had done nothing at which the American people should take umbrage. But human nature is human nature, and while the relations of the two countries are satisfactory, my contention is that they would have been made more satisfactory and that a better sentiment would have been created had this agreement been passed.

I know very well that there are people, not only in this House, but in the country, who feared that reciprocity would provide but the incipience of annexation. I know also that there are in the United States people who hope that some day annexation will take place. I have simply to say to the people in Canada who fear annexation and to the people in the United States who hope for it that they alike fail to take into account the manhood of a proud people who would equally disdain to be cajoled or to be coerced into a course inconsistent with their dignity. And, whatever attitude hon. members on the other side of the House may assume, we on this side have sufficient confidence in our own honour to do the best we can for our country and not fear the consequences. Our patriotism is of such robustness that it is equally impervious to the allurements of favour or to the debasing suggestions of fear.

It is true that in the recent elections we lost ground. We lost ground in every part of Canada except in the prairie provinces. There the feeling was so strong that it could not be influenced by appeals to passion and prejudice, and we have come back from that section of country as strong as when the House was dissolved. In this there is a strange situation which cannot be overlooked by the men in office, the men upon whom rests the responsibility of governing this country. The men in the prairie provinces are growers of wheat and herders of cattle. The producers in this territory between the Great Lakes and the mountains have, on the other side of the international boundary, and almost at their very doors, a market which is to-day something like 10 cents a bushel higher than their own.

Mr. STAPLES. Might I ask the right hon. gentleman a question?

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order. Sit down.

Mr. STAPLES. What was the difference in price 4 days or 4 weeks prior to the 21st September?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. My hon. friend (Mr. Staples) knows, probably better than I do, that, taking it day in and day out during the 12 months of the year, the difference is from eight cents to twelve cents in favour of the American market. The Canadian cattle grower has now no other market than the British market. This market is open to him, but it is hampered by an embargo against which we have protested again and again, but protested in vain. These men were looking for the American market. They are denied it by the action of the present government. What is going to be done for them? It would not be human nature for these men to rest idle and be satisfied. They are labouring—and it is but natural that it should be so—under a sense of wrong and injury. If you peruse the newspapers of the west you cannot but be impressed with the existence of this sense of wrong and injury. But there is more than that; you find indications in those papers of an impression growing in the minds of the people there that in the attitude taken by this government, western interests were sacrificed to eastern interests. There is in this a danger far greater, far more to be apprehended than the vain, illusory idea of annexation. There is nothing more detrimental to our national life than that there should be cultivated between the east and the west the feeling to which I have invited the attention of my hon. friend. I do not ask to-day for an answer; it would not be reasonable to ask the government at this time to be prepared to offer a new policy. But at no distant day the government should be prepared to deal with that situation and give the western people some compensation for the benefit which they expected from the trade agreement, of which benefit they are deprived.

But there is another question which is in the air, a question which was spoken of even to-day by the seconder of this address: there is the naval question. And upon the naval question we have not heard a word in the speech from the Throne. On the 31st of March, 1909, this House by resolution unanimously passed and affirmed the following proposition:—

The House fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada, as they increase in numbers and wealth, to assume in larger measure the responsibilities of national defence.

The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the