

prophets. For my part, I have always endeavoured to view questions of trade as purely business questions. I think it is very rarely that any question can come before this House, or this committee, in which sentiment is to be irrevocably intermingled. The question before the chair at the present moment is neither more nor less than to give effect to a tentative agreement arrived at between certain commissioners representing the government of Canada and certain commissioners representing the government of the United States by which it is proposed to have certain reciprocity of trade between the two countries. Since this question was first mooted in the House and before this committee, the fact that it was an old question has been frequently stated by hon. gentlemen who have taken part in the discussion. My recollection carries me back as far as 1879, when the Conservative party was returned to power upon the question of the National Policy. The very first session of parliament after the new government was called to power they proposed what was known as a standing offer to the United States whereby the government led by Sir John Macdonald offered to the United States reciprocity in animals, fruit, hay, vegetables, wheat, barley, rye, oats and other grains, fish, meats and lumber. Now, I am sure there is no hon. gentleman sitting opposite to me who will say that Sir John Macdonald was actuated by any sentiments of disloyalty towards this country or towards the imperial connection when he placed in the platform of his party that standing offer of reciprocal relations between Canada and the United States in respect of natural products. Again, in 1891, the issue before the people was the trade issue which we have at the present time. The Conservative party of the day went to the country on the issue of reciprocity. And the subject was dealt with in certain state papers which are on record and available to hon. members of this House. I have here a letter written by Lord Stanley of Preston, Governor General of Canada, to Lord Knutsford,

Government House,

Ottawa, December 13, 1890.

My Lord,—I have the honour to send to Your Lordship to-day a telegraphic message in cipher, of which the following is the substance:

With reference to my telegram of the 10th instant this government is desirous to propose a joint commission such as that of 1871, with authority to deal without limitation and to prepare a treaty respecting the following subjects:

1. Renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, with the modifications required by altered circumstances of both countries, and with the extensions deemed by the commission to be in the interests of Canada and the United States.

2. Reconsideration treaty of 1888, with respect to the Atlantic fisheries with the aim of

securing the free admission into United States markets of Canadian fishery products in return for facilities to be granted to United States fishermen, to buy bait and supplies and to tranship cargoes in Canada. All such privileges to be mutual.

3. Protection of mackerel and other fisheries on the Atlantic ocean and in inland waters also.

Taking the agreement now before the chair in connection with the agreement which was arrived at by Sir Allen Aylesworth, Minister of Justice, and the Hon. the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Brodeur) at Washington some weeks ago, we have a settlement of those very questions which it was proposed by the late Conservative government should be dealt with by this joint high commission. It is a circumstance to be noted that the Conservative government of that day was so anxious to disclose to the people of Canada the fact that they were about to bring about such a boon to the people that they violated certain confidences which existed between them and the commissioners at Washington, for which I venture to say they were severely reprimanded later. I have here a letter written by J. G. Blaine, to Senator Baker. It reads:

Dear Mr. Baker,—I authorize you to contradict the rumours you refer to. There are no negotiations whatever on foot for a reciprocity treaty with Canada, and you may be assured no such scheme for reciprocity with the Dominion confined to natural products will be entertained by this government.

Yours very truly,

JAMES G. BLAINE.

It would appear from this that the effort of Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues to negotiate a treaty with the United States confined to natural products was not likely to be acceptable to the government of the United States. It was insisted upon by the government of the United States and their representatives of that day that any treaty of trade to be entered into between the two countries must not be confined to natural products, but must also include manufactured articles. That was an addition to the treaty which was not acceptable to the manufacturing interests of Canada in 1891 any more than it is acceptable to the manufacturing interests of Canada at the present time. But, Sir, I have further evidence of the fact that the late government was not dealing frankly with either the people of Canada or the people of the United States with respect to these negotiations. I have here a letter addressed by Mr. Blaine to Sir Julian Pauncefote, then British ambassador at Washington:

Department of State,

Washington, April 1, 1891.

While no notes were exchanged between us I carefully minuted my modification of the