

member for Richmond, there are many hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House who are in favour of reciprocity; and if so, I am at a loss to understand the reason why they have always greeted the efforts of the Liberal party for reciprocity with such torrents of abuse. They have stated, again and again, that unrestricted reciprocity would lead to annexation. My hon. friend from Iberville (Mr. Béchard), alluded to that this evening, and I can allude to it again. For my part, I never understood how unrestricted reciprocity would lead to annexation. Will any one tell me how it will? Will any one tell me how it is, that if the Canadian people were to have reciprocity with the United States, restricted or unrestricted, annexation would follow? If we had a commercial treaty with the States, whether restricted or unrestricted, the institutions of our country would continue just the same as they are to-day; the country would continue to be governed under the same British parliamentary system as it is to-day. Every man entitled to it would have a vote as he has to-day. Therefore, how can it be said that unrestricted reciprocity would lead to annexation? Is it to be supposed that if the Canadian people were to come in contact with the American people, our loyalty would fade away? Do hon. gentlemen opposite suppose that, even if we had closer trade relations with the Americans, the loyalty of the Canadian people would vanish into thin air? If hon. gentlemen opposite hold any such opinion, I hold that the much vaunted loyalty of the Conservative party is hollow and unreal, and is brought forward only to do service for party purposes and for nothing else. I have heard it stated many a time by hon. gentlemen on the other side, and in the press, that they find an argument for their contention in the letter of the Hon. Mr. Blake. Mr. Blake gave it as his opinion, and we hear it quoted from time to time on the floor of this House, that unrestricted reciprocity would lead to annexation. I discuss this question fairly, and I will quote the words of Mr. Blake:

The tendency in Canada of unrestricted free trade with the States, higher duties being maintained against the United Kingdom, would be towards political union.

But I ask hon. gentlemen on the other side, whether Mr. Blake did not, upon that occasion, confine himself simply to reciprocity? Did he not also give his opinion as to the National Policy?

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. LAURIER. Does any one deny it? I am surprised at the power of denial of some hon. gentlemen on the other side. I am surprised that there are gentlemen on the other side who will deny that Mr. Blake said also that the tendency of the National Policy was direct to annexation. Allow me to quote his words again:

The Canadian Conservative party has failed to accomplish the prediction of its promoters. Its real tendency has been, as foretold twelve years ago, towards disintegration and annexation, instead of consolidation and the maintenance of that British connection of which they claim to be the special guardians.

This is the language of Mr. Blake. Two years afterwards, we hear hon. gentlemen on the other side deny that Mr. Blake gave it as his opinion that the National Policy directly led to annexation. If you are, on the other side, against unrestricted reciprocity, because Mr. Blake said that it would lead to annexation, how is it that you still retain the National Policy, which, in the opinion of Mr. Blake, is bound to produce the very same result? Destroy the National Policy at once, put it away at once, because every moment, every day you keep it on the Statute-book, is another step taken towards annexation. There is, however, a more serious objection than this to unrestricted reciprocity. This objection of annexation I do not treat seriously. I do not affect to treat it seriously, I dismiss it altogether; but I say, without any hesitation, that there is more serious objection to unrestricted reciprocity, and that is the discrimination against England. This is an objection, which, for my part, I have always treated with respect. I respect the feeling of gentlemen on the other side, who from motives, which I will not discuss, would hesitate to discriminate against England; but I tell hon. gentlemen opposite that when they take up that question of discrimination against England, they are raising against reciprocity an objection which England long ago abandoned. My hon. friend beside me from Prince Edward Island (Mr. Davies) proved the other day most conclusively, that in the Brown treaty England had abandoned that objection in the most formal manner. It is true that his statement was denied by gentlemen on the other side. It is true that they pretended to prove, by the language of Mr. Brown, that England had never abandoned its objection to discrimination. Well, that is a question we can discuss again. I grant that when Mr. Brown went to Washington, as plenipotentiary of the Canadian Government, to discuss reciprocity, he had it in his mind not to discriminate against England, and he kept that in his mind, not only at the outset, but throughout the whole negotiation. I will quote from his speech, delivered in the Senate in 1875:

I come now, hon. gentlemen, to the objections which have been urged against the treaty from such quarters as entitle them to formal answer. The first of these is the allegation that the treaty discriminated against Great Britain in favour of the United States. Nothing could be more unfounded than this. It was perfectly understood from the opening of the negotiations, that no article could be free from duty in regard to the United States that was not also open with regard to Great Britain, and nothing else was ever contemplated for a moment.

I am not surprised at this, and no one will be surprised at it, when I refer to the first