

discussion, which took place in this House—as to whether the most-favoured-nation clause had anything to do with a reciprocity treaty, the view I took—which was that it had nothing to do with it, but that the two were wholly apart—was subscribed to by the late Sir John Thompson. Sir, it will interest the House, I think, to know what has been said by persons whose positions undoubtedly entitles them to very considerable respect, as to the proper interpretation to be given to the favoured-nation clause. Quoting from Wharton's "International Law Digest," the first thing I find is this definition :

A covenant to give privileges granted to the "most-favoured nation" only refers to gratuitous privileges, and does not cover privileges granted on the condition of a reciprocal advantage.

Now, that is plain and straightforward, and common-sense; and it is further fortified by a despatch of the American Secretary of State in 1884 on the same subject, which reads as follows :—

Your despatch of the 8th ultimo has been received. You report that Mr. Carter, the special envoy from Hawaii to England and Germany, had succeeded in inducing the German Government to yield the point assumed by those governments, that the most-favoured-nation clause in their treaties with Hawaii entitled them to equal privileges in regard to imports with those obtained by the United States by the reciprocity treaty with the same country, and that no definite understanding had been reached with England, although it was probable that the proposition made by that government would be accepted.

If that statement be correct—and I see no reason to doubt it—it would follow that under closely analogous circumstances the German Government having possessed a favoured-nation clause withdrew their claim after a remonstrance from the proper authorities. Then, Mr. Evarts, a fair authority on matters of that kind, in speaking in reference to the claim made that nations possessing the most-favoured-nation clause should be entitled to the same privileges as were conferred on the United States Government by Hawaii, proceeds to say :

This is the precise thing the treaty does not intend. Its intention is to secure exclusive benefits to both contracting parties through special privileges granted by each to the other. To admit the claims of a third party to come in and enjoy all the benefits conceded by both principals, without any payment in equivalent special privileges to either, would be an unprecedented thing.

There are numerous other statements to the same effect, bearing on this particular contention that the most-favoured-nation clause necessarily confers the right to share in the benefits of a reciprocity treaty.

Sir, I need not say that we are not disposed to admit that this view can be conceded without long debate and without full trial. Now, the fact is, that the hon. member, if he will excuse me for saying so, did not see the point at issue. I will

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.

waive, for argument's sake, the underlying question whether reciprocity has anything to do with the most-favoured-nation clause. But I submit two points to both of which he will do well to address himself. I take the point, in the first instance, that when Great Britain, in 1862 and 1865, made a treaty such as she is reported to have done with the Zollverein and Belgium, Great Britain obviously meant that treaty to apply to those colonies dependent on the mother state, and which had not been conceded self-governing powers, and the right entirely to regulate their own fiscal policy. That would be a natural and fair construction, but I will not insist too much upon that, though the question requires discussion. But I say, with respect to the offer we now make, that it is not a preferential offer at all in the true, legal sense of the word. That offer is open to all the world. The Americans may avail themselves of it and so may the Germans and the Belgians. The whole world are welcome to avail themselves of it on the same terms and the same conditions on which England may take advantage of it. Where is the preference there? The hon. gentleman may tell me: Legally you may be correct, but in fact you do give a preference, for England is the only country, except one or two small colonies, that admits your goods on these terms. Be it so. It may be true that, under our policy, preference is really and effectively given to England just as it was true that, under the tariff of hon. gentlemen opposite, England and the importation of England's goods was discriminated against to an extraordinary degree. I have here the Trade and Navigation returns which show the practical working of the policy of hon. gentlemen opposite. These returns show that, in the very last year of their term of office, we exported to England apparently \$66,000,000 worth of our products, we exported to the United States \$44,000,000, we bought from England \$32,000,000, and from the United States \$58,000,000 worth. There, if you will, is a genuine practical discrimination to an enormous extent, against England and in favour of the United States, under the policy of hon. gentlemen opposite. I have always said that the National Policy was a Yankee device, imitated from the Yankees, and in fact a benefit to them chiefly, and there is the proof of it.

Mr. HUGHES. What was the hon. gentleman's proposal at Washington?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. It was that if the Americans were willing to give us full and fair reciprocal advantages, I would recommend trading with them for the benefit of Canada and the Empire too; and I think the hon. gentleman may find out, before he is many years older, that very probably—although, I admit, it is a little roundabout way—this is not a bad way to get it. Sir, I contend