

has argued, in or out of Parliament, that Canada has not an undoubted right, under the charter of government she now enjoys, to act as she thinks best in such matters of domestic concern.

The freedom Canada enjoys in the regulation of her home and foreign commerce is very clearly illustrated by her State Papers, which give a history of the various negotiations which have led to the extension of her commercial relations with other countries. In all treaties that may affect Canadian interests, the right of Canada to have a voice in their adoption or rejection, has been distinctly recognised for a quarter of a century. The Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, between the United States and the British North American Provinces, was an important concession made to colonial commerce by the Government of Great Britain, in response to the demands of the colonies. In this case, the Provincial Legislatures were allowed to accept or reject the treaty, as each might deem most expedient. This principle was still more emphatically carried out in the case of the more important Treaty of Washington, where one of the British Commissioners was Sir John A. Macdonald, the Premier of Canada. In the subsequent arrangement of the Fishery Award, in conformity with the provisions of the above treaty, one of the arbitrators was Sir Alexander Galt. The results in these cases have been, on the whole, eminently favourable to Canada, in comparison with former negotiations with the United States, which too-often ended in the injury of the colonies, as the history of the boundary line between Canada and the United States painfully attests.

Equal consideration has been given to Canadian interests on other occasions, when Canadian statesmen have been desirous of enlarging their trade relations with other colonies, even though the result might, to some extent, conflict with the commercial policy of the mother country. In a

despatch of the 12th July, 1855, the Imperial policy was laid down in these words:—

‘But this policy of freedom for the producer and trader, as well as the consumer, would be seriously affected, if colonial legislatures were to establish differential duties in favour of their own natural productions or manufactures, whether against the British or foreign producer. And a similar violation of the principles of free trade would result, if favour were shown in the legislation of a colony, to one colony over another, by the reduction or total abolition of duties in favour of particular colonies.’

But the principle laid down in this and other despatches since 1850 has been departed from as respects the dependencies of the Crown in British North America. When, in 1860, it was proposed to have free trade between the Provinces, the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade recommended that it should be made a condition of the assent of Her Majesty’s Government to the proposal in question, that any such exemption from import duty should be equally extended to all similar produce and manufacture of other countries. To this proposed condition Canada took exception, and, after some correspondence on the subject, Her Majesty’s Government, in a despatch from the Duke of Newcastle, under date of 5th February, 1861, intimated that they ‘had no wish to offer any obstacle to any endeavours which might be made by the respective Provincial Governments to bring about a free commercial intercourse between the North American Provinces.’ The policy laid down in that despatch was carried out in 1867, which created a commercial as well as political union between the Provinces. Again, in 1868, by a despatch dated 24th July, to the Governor-General, it is declared that no objection is made ‘to the power taken to admit the produce of any of the neighbouring North American Provinces free,’ and a Bill, passed by the