

American politics. That is one of the chief objections I had to the reciprocity agreement.

Mr. FIELDING: I must say that I fail to understand the objection of my hon. friend about an "agreement." Every transaction that you have with another party involves some sort of an agreement, and I am amazed to find my hon. friend say that he objects to an agreement. Does he say that he objected because the agreement was a binding agreement?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: The agreement had a denouncing clause, it is true, but in substance and in effect it would have been a binding agreement, and that was the objection I had. That objection which the Hon. George Brown had was precisely that which I have mentioned. If my hon. friend will look up the negotiations at the time I am speaking of he will find that that was a strong objection taken by as good a Liberal as there ever was in the House.

Mr. FIELDING: I do not think it is necessary to look up what Mr. George Brown or anybody else said about some other agreement. We have the simple facts of this agreement. We went to Washington and came to an understanding which was embodied in correspondence. The letters exchanged amounted in a sense to an agreement. The best kind of agreement with some people is what is known as a "gentleman's agreement." There are people who will regard a debt of honour as a much greater obligation than an ordinary transaction, and there are nations which will live up to a gentleman's agreement although they will not make a written agreement. We have a gentleman's agreement with Japan. There is not a scrap of paper confirming it, but Japan has lived up to the agreement. Now, what were the words of this agreement which we had with the United States? I do not intend to occupy very much of the time of the House, but I do not think there will be any serious objection to my reading the passage in question.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Go on.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: May I interrupt the hon. gentleman to ask him a question?

Mr. FIELDING: Certainly.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: Was not this to be a written agreement validated by legislation?

Mr. FIELDING: Yes sir, but a written agreement which could be terminated at [Sir Thomas White.]

any moment at the will of either party. Again and again, by the opponents of that agreement, it was represented as something that was going to tie the hands of Canada. Well, nobody objected to the reciprocity of 1854 because it would tie the hands of Canada. Every bargain you make with any man ties your hands so long as it exists. In the case of this agreement at Washington it was not our desire that it should take the form of a treaty, and I frankly state that it was my view that Canada should not be bound to a treaty but should make an agreement which could be put into operation and, if it proved beneficial to both countries, it could then be confirmed by a treaty. What are the words in that portion of the letters exchanged in relation to the agreement? This letter is signed by myself and my lamented friend, Mr. William Paterson, and is addressed to the Secretary of State at Washington. The passage to which I refer reads:

The Governments of the two countries having made this agreement from the conviction that, if confirmed by the necessary legislative authorities, it will benefit the people on both sides of the border line, we may reasonably hope and expect that the arrangement, if so confirmed will remain in operation for a considerable period. Only this expectation on the part of both Governments would justify the time and labour that have been employed in the maturing of the proposed measures. Nevertheless, it is distinctly understood that we do not attempt to bind for the future the action of the United States Congress or the Parliament of Canada, but that each of these authorities shall be absolutely free to make any change of tariff policy or of any other matter covered by the present arrangement that may be deemed expedient. We look for the continuance of the arrangement, not because either party is bound to it, but because of our conviction that the more liberal trade policy thus to be established will be viewed by the people of the United States and Canada as one which will strengthen the friendly relations now happily prevailing and promote the commercial interests of both countries.

That was the kind of agreement which my hon. friend said he could not stand for. He said to-day: What have we to-day without the agreement? We have free wheat and free flour. Free wheat? Oh, yes; but who heard the story of free wheat in 1911? Were we not told that if wheat were carried from North to South instead of West to East, the lines of the Canadian Pacific railway would become rusty through non-use? Were we not told that? My hon. friend from Brantford (Mr. Cockshutt) said that free wheat was one of the great bones of contention, and we were told that if there was one thing in the agreement more than another which would be fatal to the commercial interests of the country, it was that