

denial. The fact is, that since 1866 when the reciprocity treaty, which was looked upon by our people with a great deal of favor, was abrogated, there has been no party and no government in this country that was unfavorable to a renewal of this treaty with the United States on fair and honorable terms. In 1866, when the treaty was abrogated, Sir John A. Macdonald was at the head of the government of the province of Canada, and in conjunction with representatives of the maritime provinces, and as earnestly as the representatives of the maritime provinces could do, he bent his energies in the direction of obtaining a renewal of that treaty. But the obtaining of a renewal of that treaty then was a matter of impossibility because the government of the United States had set itself to abrogate that treaty once for all. In 1868 the question came before the house of commons of Canada. Sir John A. Macdonald (applause) and his friends were still in power and in framing the tariff which was then adopted in view of new trade relations with the United States a clause was inserted which held out an invitation to that country to enlarge trade relations with this country in these terms, that a large number of the products of both countries might be interchanged free on either side. But the United States government were unwilling to enter into such an arrangement. Now, sir, it is made a charge against us that we have not forced upon our neighbors the adoption of a new treaty, and that we have not been pressing forward negotiations in that direction. We have expressed continuously since 1868, as we then did by that provision,—to the government and people of the United States our willingness to enter into proper trade relations with them. And when a proposition was made in 1868, by Mr. Dorion a member of the French liberal wing in the house of commons, that we should do more than this,—that we should do more than seemed consistent with the advantage and honor of Canada, that we should declare by resolution in parliament our desire for a reciprocity treaty, and that parliament should command the government of the country to enter into negotiations with the United States for a new treaty, it was felt by the public men of Canada on both sides that that proposition was not only inconsistent with the honor of the country but with its material advantage, and that resolution was voted down in the house of commons, not by any mere party vote, for if you look at the public record to-day you will find that those who voted against it were not solely the members of the conservative government and party, but side by side with them such men as Mr. Blake, Mr. Mills, Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Cartwright,—so that I think I am right in saying that the record of both parties is consistent upon that question, that in so far as a declaration of an opinion in favor of increased trade relations with that country or with any other is concerned, we have expressed from then till now our willingness to enter into these negotiations, and that it has been deemed desirable by both political parties that there we should rest. (Applause).

In 1874, when our opponents were in power, a step was made that was deemed desirable. The late Mr. George Brown induced his friends, who were in the Mackenzie government, to take very active steps in the direction of negotiations for a reciprocity treaty. He went to Washington to enter into negotiations there, and came back declaring that as a result of his inquiries, everything was ripe for the negotiation of a new treaty, and he returned to the United States armed with large power to enter into negotiations for a treaty. This first attempt in advance of the mere expression of willingness to enter into a new treaty was attended with lamentable failure. It was an attempt honestly made without the shadow of a doubt, but an attempt made, I have reason to believe against the better judgment of Mr. Mackenzie. It not only failed in accomplishing anything but it brought ridicule on those who were pressing forward these negotiations. The result was that in 1878, when Mr. Mackenzie was asked in the house of commons whether he would renew the efforts to obtain a reciprocity treaty, his statement made there, as leader of the liberal party, was that he would do nothing after what had taken place until the first step had been taken by the government of the United States. Now, sir, if we have not any large commercial relations with the United States it is not because the government of the day is unwilling to enter into enlarged commercial relations with that country or any other country, for I have no hesitation in saying here responsible, as I am for every word I utter in that regard, that every member of Sir John A. Macdonald's government to-day, from the leader of the government himself down to the youngest member of the government, is in favor of any fair and honorable reciprocity treaty with the United States. If we have not obtained such a treaty the reason is that according to the old proverb it takes two to make a bargain. There is one individual in this country who lately conceived the original idea that it does not take two to make a bargain and that individual, in the Free Press office at Ottawa, in the absolute dearth of reliable news which he could telegraph abroad, undertook to get up a reciprocity treaty himself, and this treaty he drew up all from his own wonderful brain by patching together the Washington treaty and the reciprocity treaty, and he started this out as being a draft treaty which was pressed by the government of the United States for the consideration of the government of Canada; and the most remarkable thing of it all was that out of sympathy for his secession friends in Nova Scotia he declared that this treaty, manufactured by himself ten minutes before, had been pressed by the imperial government out of consideration for the repeal and secession movement. It was not only exceedingly ingenious and kind to make the treaty, but it was very kind and generous to remember his friends down here by the sea. (Laughter.) But I regret to say that negotiations have not so far advanced by any means, and that that young man is still considerably ahead.