

it is said, as the result of a friendly suggestion from Washington.

Here we have a statement in the Government organ, the "Empire," taken as an inspired statement by the parties supporting the Administration, no person in the country being in a position to contradict it, that Canada had been invited to Washington to negotiate a reciprocity treaty. We knew nothing of the intrigues, the solicitation, or pressure brought to bear upon the United States to get them to give their acquiescence to authorize the Canadian commissioners to go to Washington. But it was sprung on the people that Canada had been invited to discuss reciprocity, because the Government knew that if there was one thing the people ardently desired it was closer trade relations with the United States, and so they placed themselves on record on that occasion as agreeing in their burning zeal for trade relations with the United States with the party that confronted them. They had the additional advantage, as it was supposed, taking the word of their organ and their speakers, of having an official position and of being invited to prepare a treaty upon such a basis as might be agreed upon. The High Commissioner hurried over from England and very improperly hurled himself with all his enormous energy and great ability into that campaign, and in that famous speech in Toronto which opened the campaign, with a great deal of dash and enthusiasm, he inspired his followers with the idea that they were about to secure a reciprocity treaty with the United States. After defining his position, the High Commissioner in that speech on the 18th of February, said it was monstrous for anybody to say that he had not been the ardent friend of reciprocal arrangements with the United States. He went on:

I say, Sir, that the means of obtaining fair reciprocal trade arrangements with the United States would be utterly defeated, if the party who were now professing to carry out a thing they knew to be an utter delusion, could obtain power. But, Sir, with my right hon. friend sustained, as he will be, when he goes down on the 4th March to Washington, in response to the invitation received from the United States, of which I am able to speak personally (applause), when he goes down there, strengthened by the electors of Canada, then, I say, the prospects are very good indeed.

Here was a cool, deliberate statement of a leading statesman of the country, a man of enormous strength of will representing the Government as fully as the Prime Minister represented the country, declaring that they would go to Washington in response to an invitation received from the United States. Mark the sequel. The elections were over and the same High Commissioner in a different tone now writes to his chief of the interview with Mr. Blaine, and says:

Mr. Blaine also said that he did not agree with the references which had been made by Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper, during the elections, as to what had taken place concerning the

initiation of the proposed informal discussion between the Dominion and the United States representatives. The invitation, Mr. Blaine contended, had come from Sir Julian.

He wrote further:

I told Mr. Blaine that I wished at the outset to recognize the accuracy of the statement contained in his letter to Sir Julian Pauncefote, which I had seen, in reference to the initiation of the negotiation regarding reciprocal trade arrangements between the two countries—that I believe it arose from the negotiations which had recently taken place between the United States and Newfoundland and the desire expressed by Canada to be included in any arrangement such as had been understood to have been contemplated by the United States and Newfoundland, and that upon that being communicated to him by Sir Julian Pauncefote, he had expressed his willingness to open negotiations for reciprocal trade relations between Canada and the United States.

I said that the fact that he had expressed his readiness to receive the representations that Canada wished to make would show that he was quite open to consider that question.

And so this humiliating episode passed over. The Government of Canada officially stated that which was not true. They had intrigued, caucused, begged and negotiated for an unofficial interview and that had been assented to by the United States in the person of Mr. Blaine. Yet the people of the country were made to believe the contrary, and did not know until after the election that they had received no invitation from the United States and that they had merely forced this matter in order that they might have some cry on which to go to the country. When the delegates, subsequently, after several postponements of the debate or conference upon the subject of reciprocity, were prepared again to meet the Government at Washington, the Secretary of State was obliged to beg in advance that the subject might not become public as it had before. This promise was given. But they had no great reason for publicity as no election was pending and no publicity was given further than that given in this House, and that has been very inadequate. It is much to be regretted that we have not yet seen an official statement of the interview between our Government and the Government of the United States in regard to reciprocity on the last occasion on which our commissioners went to Washington. When that report comes down we will be in a position to judge as to the correctness of the recollections of that episode as between our own Ministers and the Ministers of the United States. At present, suffice it to say, there is a discrepancy, there is an assertion from one side and a denial from the other, which, taken in connection with the false representations made by our Ministers at the time of the elections, leave us in a very doubtful position as to the correctness of any statement that may be made by our own Ministers. We find that the Minister of Finance, in his statement of the interview, gives Parliament an altogether different impres-

Mr. FLINT.