

TUPPER'S REMARKABLE SPEECH

Sir Charles, as I have said, returned to Canada after a somewhat prolonged absence to find the trade and commerce of the country at an absolute standstill, to find that the attempted colonization of the Northwest had resulted in a most dismal failure, and lastly, and as a representative of the Maritime Provinces, he could not possibly be blind to the fact that an unexampled exodus was taking place on the part of the people of Canada into the United States.

I have here a curious speech made about that time by Sir Charles Tupper, to which I will direct your attention:

"I would like to draw the attention of the House to what has been accomplished by this treaty. I have told you what position Canada stood in with regard to the United States of America before the initiation of these proceedings. I have told you that we stood face to face with an enactment which had been put on the Statute book by a unanimous vote of Congress, ratified by the President, providing for non-intercourse between the United States and Canada. I need not tell you that the Bill meant commercial war, that it meant not only the ordinary suspension of friendly feeling and intercourse between two countries, but that it involved more than that. If that Bill had been brought into operation by the proclamation of the United States, I have no hesitation in saying that we stood in the relation to that great country of commercial war, and the line is very narrow which separates a commercial war between two countries from an actual war. Yesterday we stood face to face with a non-intercourse bill sustained by the united action of the Senate and the House of Representatives, sustained by almost the whole press, Republican and Democratic, of the United States, sustained with few exceptions by a prejudiced, irritated and exasperated people of 60,000,000 lying on our borders."

SIR CHARLES' CONVENIENT ILLNESS

Now, sir, there are one or two things to be noted with respect to this speech: First of all, that Sir Charles Tupper realized the dangerous position into which we had drifted with respect to the United States, and in the second place, to those who choose to read between the lines, it can only be interpreted as a very severe censure on his colleagues who had permitted such a state of things to exist. One thing is certain, that when a few months later, in 1888, I brought forward my motion for full and free reciprocity with the United States, Sir Charles Tupper, who was then Minister of Finance, placed himself on the sick list, and though the debate was protracted for many days, continuing *de die in diem* as it most well deserved, and though almost every man of note in Parliament took part in it, as you will perceive by a reference to Hansard of that date, Sir Charles did not appear in Parliament nor vote on the question, although a very few days later he delivered his budget speech in apparent excellent health and with all his old vigor and energy.

I am far from blaming Sir Charles for his action. I have no doubt that he was of the belief, as I was of the belief, that under the circumstances the sole and only chance for immediate recovery lay