

ting this clause in the Act, that more is wanted in order to accomplish the purpose which the clause would serve, that what is wanted is communication and negotiation with those powers and countries with which we desire to enter into freer commercial relations. We want communication, we want to give information, we want to enter into negotiation to give full information as to our position, to ask for full consideration of our mutual interests in order that satisfactory conclusions may be reached, and that effectual arrangements may be made to carry out the objects which are indicated in the clause to which I had referred, and which are indicated in a larger sense by the policy which those clauses foreshadow in this direction of procuring by negotiation and communication freer foreign markets and better trade. What has been done? What has been done since the period of the Reciprocity Treaty? Nothing effectual has been done since the abrogation of that treaty. England in her commercial treaties has not—speaking in the large—helped us. She has, as a rule, regarded in the making of these treaties her own trade only, her own interests only. She has negotiated only with reference to that trade and those interests. She has not, as a rule, invited information. She has not, as a rule, invited negotiation on the subject in the consideration of this and, I suppose, her other dependencies, and it is admitted that—from the circumstances that the French Treaty was of the limited character to which I had referred—disastrous results ensued at a period at which those unfavorable results could least of all have been fortunate for the ship-building trade of Canada, and particularly Quebec followed. We know that some twelve or thirteen years afterwards the Government of the French decided that it was a wrong interpretation of the French Treaty, on the assumption that it extended to the dependencies of the Empire, when in truth it did not extend beyond the United Kingdom. The duty was raised from 2 francs to 40 francs and the trade was thus impaired, and it languished, and we also proceeded to fortify ourselves, under those circumstances, by raising the duty upon an article which we have largely imported from France, the article of wine, and the consumption of that article was largely diminished; while in our export in ships, although there was some increase between 1874 and 1877 it was so trifling and disproportionate that it was quite obvious that the trade between the two countries suffered, and was impaired by the construction which was placed on the French Treaty, and upon the legislative action in making that change to which I have referred, our efforts have been futile. We have accomplished nothing. There has been much cry but little wool. There has really been nothing done except to make a stir and to pay some large bills. We have been unable as yet to make any efficient progress. All our efforts have been complicated and embarrassed by overshadowing English interests, and by that complicated system of diplomacy which prevails under the existing arrangements. I cannot do better perhaps in this connection than to quote the words of the present High Commissioner of Canada, Sir A. T. Galt, delivered in 1870, when this subject came up for discussion in this House. He said:

"There is another advantage that would arise from the adoption of the course indicated by these resolutions. It is the avoidance of repeated reference to the Imperial Departments in connection with negotiations for trade relations between other countries and Canada. If there is one thing that embarrasses such negotiations more than another, it is the fact that they have to go through so many hands. First, they have to be reported on by one Department, then referred to another, and still another before they can possibly come back to the Government of the people most interested in them."

Now, it is said that great recent improvements have been effected. I deny it. I find no proof of any improvements having been effected since that time. I call for the results, for the proofs. I want to see what the change is that has taken place for the better. I say the results are nil, and I

say that the fact that those results are nil is partly due to our being unreasonably embarrassed by supposed British interests. For example, we send our Commissioner to Spain, and we, ourselves, built some castles in that country in the expectation of the fortunate results of his mission. But like other castles in Spain they came to nothing, and why. He says he postponed negotiations in Spain because they might possibly interfere with and embarrass some trade negotiations of Her Majesty's Government for some better trade with Spain. Now, I have been unable to find, in the correspondence or by any examination of the question, what there could be of real complication or embarrassment if only the true fundamental and underlying principles were once clearly set out, and that is that circumstanced as we are, and as the United Kingdom is, our trade relations with these countries are separate and distinct, each to be managed and settled for on terms suitable to each different community, not one in the slightest degree dependent upon the other. The other day the hon. First Minister declared that he was proud to be able to inform the House that the British Government had graciously agreed that if and after the negotiations with the French Republic failed, we might be allowed to try our hand for Canada, after the negotiations for a larger trade had failed. Once, again, you find the complication of such a conjunction of these things which are really separate, which have not and cannot have any practical or substantial relation with each other. But there are other proofs than those that the circumstances still exist in our present system to which Sir Alexander T. Galt alluded in 1870, in the passage which I have read, and that difficulty has resulted disastrously to us. In explaining last Session the fruitless mission made shortly before to France, the hon. First Minister—I quote from the *Hansard* March 8th—used these words:

"When Sir A. T. Galt went first to France the Canadian Government were within an ace of obtaining an important result; if it had not been for a delay in the London Foreign Office of forty-eight hours we would have succeeded in obtaining a reduction of duty on Canadian vessels of from 4 francs to 2 francs per ton, but unfortunately the Government of Austria gave notice in the meantime to all the European nations that they withdrew from all their commercial treaties and at once prevented France, in consequence of the favored nation clause in several treaties, going on with the negotiations for a time, and solely over which Sir A. T. Galt had no control, the arrangement which was all but completed was thrown over."

A little later the hon. gentleman substantially repeated the statement. He was in Paris waiting for official authority from London, and before that arrived the notice from Austria came. Now, what I say is that it is proved by this very example that the difficulties resulting from our not being allowed to manage what is exclusively our own business, it practically resulted in evil. You find here the hon. First Minister telling us that Sir A. T. Galt had made his arrangements, but official authority was wanting from London to enable them to be formal and binding. Why? Why should we not decide for ourselves our arrangements for the reduction of duties on wines imported into Canada, and in consideration of that get a reduction from 4 francs to 2 francs per ton on ships? What in the world has any Foreign Office to do with that? They have nothing at all to do with it. Any arrangements in that direction are in one sense British policy because they involve a reduction of duty, but this arrangement in spirit and substance had been communicated beforehand to them, and such is the diplomacy that burdens the system to which we are tied under present arrangements that we could not conclude a matter, however vital and essential to us, until the Foreign Office took its time to decide. Probably it was returned in the Board of Trade, and though we had the benefit of a telegraph and all the facilities for the quick despatch of business, we were forty-eight hours too late, the Austrian notice had arrived, and so the negotiations miscarried. I do not blame Sir Alexander Galt, but I maintain he ought to have had control over the question. I maintain he ought to have been able to