

Reciprocity Treaty, and a Minute of Council of the Executive Government of this Province.

SPEECH OF MR. TOBIN.

After the reading of these papers by the Clerk

Mr. TOBIN rose and said:—Mr. Speaker—no one could hear the papers just read without feeling that very large and important benefits have been conferred, not only on the B. N. A. Provinces, but also on the United States by this treaty. I am sorry that it is about to be suspended in view of the peace and security which were secured under its provisions. Since its passage in 1854 the slightest difficulty has not arisen between the American and British fishermen; previous to that time, we were obliged to keep one or two gun boats in commission to protect the fisheries and preserve the peace in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Many difficulties arose from time to time. The British Government sent a war steamer every year to aid the provincial revenue boats to keep the poachers off the shore. Occasionally an American fishing vessel was caught inside the line, forfeited, and sold. Then came representations, affidavits, and counter-statements and contradictions, as to the fact of the legality or illegality of seizure; and the relations between the British and American Governments were several times on the eve of being interrupted. We would regret, Sir, to have a repetition of these conflicts in the Gulf; but if our neighbors will suspend a trade by which they have gained so many substantial advantages, we must be prepared to meet any contingency that may arise. We will have to put in commission one or two fast sailing gunboats or steamers to protect our fisheries. I would prefer the latter, as they could keep the Americans off the shore more effectually than sailing vessels. I think, however, that the people of the Western States will feel the loss of the suspension of this treaty more than the British Americans. The St. Lawrence will be closed against them, and though they did not use that outlet to the ocean to any great extent, still it had the effect of checking the rates of freight and tolls on the railroads and canals over which they transport their produce to the shipping ports in the United States. The very fact of the St. Lawrence being open to the farmers and planters of Western New York, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, keep freights at a moderate rate on the Erie canal, the New York Central and Erie rail roads. But as soon as the St. Lawrence is closed against them they will find that they are entirely in the hands of the railroad and canal companies. If they value their own interests, and consider the disadvantages under which they will be placed, I think they will advise their representatives in Congress to consider the matter. I notice a speech delivered by hon. Mr. Grimes in the Senate of the United States, where he says—"There is a panic in Canada; but it is a panic of the pocket, not the fear of war," and then he goes on to say, "Suspend the Reciprocity Treaty, and the merchants, bankers, and railroad companies will be bankrupt in three months." The learned Senator is mistaken, there is more vitality in Canada than he is aware of. Trade will find new channels, and the loss of the Reciprocity Treaty will not be very long felt. The British Provinces grew and prospered be-

fore it was passed or thought of, and they will continue to advance in trade and prosperity, even though it should be suspended. The language of the learned senator is not in the spirit of conciliation. How different was ours in this House when the war broke out! We expressed the deepest regret that our neighbors should have become so exasperated as to resort to the desperate expedient of shedding each other's blood; and, since then, up to the present moment, I have not heard any other sentiment uttered by a public man in British America.

It was thought in England that the city of Liverpool would be ruined by the loss of the cotton trade; but commerce very soon regulated itself—new enterprises sprung up, the volume of trade flowed into other channels, and in six months after the Southern ports were blockaded, Liverpool did not feel the loss of the embargo, and so it will be with the British Provinces. The loss may perhaps affect our neighbors quite as much as it may affect us.

My hon. friend on my right (Dr. Hamilton,) is well aware of the extent and importance of the trade between his county and the neighboring republic; and although a very large quantity of the surplus products of Kings' finds a market in Boston, New York, and Baltimore, still not sufficient to pay for the merchandise and manufactures which are carried back in return. The balance of trade with all the British Provinces is largely in favor of the United States. Very few are aware of the amount of money that is transmitted to balance the accounts. The import tables show the quantity of flour, pork, beef, butter, lard, cheese, boots, shoes, and manufactures of different descriptions which are continually flowing in from that country. One would suppose that there was wisdom enough on the part of the statesmen of America to cultivate and extend the trade, rather than to cut it off or curtail it.—The volume since the passage of the Reciprocity Treaty, has gone on steadily increasing.—Coal forms a large item in our export tables.—We sent a large quantity to Boston, New York, and Fall River; but, even should it be taxed, it must still continue to go there, as it has qualities which the Pennsylvania coal has not. It is peculiarly adapted for the forge and the foundry. Our fishermen may be at a disadvantage, the products of free industry coming into competition with protected labor; still I have no fears for the result. There will be an increased catch to make up for short price.—It is a well known fact that since the American fishermen have had the unrestricted use of the fishing grounds, our catch of mackerel along the shores has gone on steadily decreasing, year after year, till the business has become so precarious that, to the westward particularly, it is almost entirely given up. The Americans keep the fish on the feeding grounds all the summer and fall by throwing overboard large quantities of bait; and when it becomes late and stormy, and the Americans are obliged to leave the Gulf the fishery is over on our shores. The toil-worn Nova Scotian has to haul in his nets after a long summer spent without remuneration for his outfit or labor. On the whole, it is a question, on my mind, so far as the interests of the fishermen are concerned, if it would not be the best thing that could happen for their interests to have the Reciprocity Treaty suspend-