

The committee would specially bring under Your Excellency's notice the importance of instituting negotiations for the renewal of the treaty with such modifications as may be mutually assented to before the year's notice required to terminate it shall be given by the American government, for they fear that the notice if once given could not be revoked, and they clearly foresee that owing to the variety and possibly the conflictory nature of the interests involved on our own side, a new treaty could not be concluded and the requisite legislation to give effect to it be obtained before the year would have expired and with it the treaty.

Under such circumstances, even with the certain prospect of an early renewal of the treaty, considerable loss and much inconvenience would inevitably ensue.

It would be impossible to express in figures with any approach to accuracy the extent to which the facilities of commercial intercourse created by the reciprocity treaty have contributed to the wealth and prosperity of this province, and it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance which the people of Canada attach to the continued enjoyment of these facilities.

Nor is the subject entirely devoid of political significance, under the beneficent operation of the system of self-government which the later policy of the mother country has accorded to Canada in common with the other colonies possessing representative institutions combined with the advantages secured by the reciprocity treaty of an unrestricted commerce with our nearest neighbour in the natural productions of the two countries, all agitation for organic changes has ceased, all dissatisfaction with the existing political relations of the province has wholly disappeared although the committee would grossly misrepresent their countrymen if they were to affirm that their loyalty to their Sovereign would be diminished in the slightest degree by the withdrawal, through the unfriendly action of a foreign government of mere commercial privileges however valuable these might be deemed, they think they cannot err in directing the attention of the enlightened statesmen who wield the destinies of the great empire of which it is the proudest boast of Canadians that their country forms a part, to the connection which is usually found to exist between the material prosperity and the political contentment of a people; for in doing so they feel that they are appealing to the highest motives that can actuate patriotic statesmen, the desire to perpetuate a Dominion founded on the affectionate allegiance of a prosperous and contented people.

This is the statement embalmed in a minute of council by the men who represented public opinion, who represented the best interests of Canada, on the eve of the abrogation of the famous reciprocity treaty which lasted from 1854 to 1866. That treaty was abrogated, but I come again to my first proposition, and I say that since its abrogation there have been repeated efforts made by every government, every Minister of Finance in this country, to obtain a similar commercial agreement between the United States and

Canada. Several attempts at renewals were made. The first were made by Sir Alexander T. Galt, Sir John Rose, Sir Francis Hincks, and in 1874 by the Hon. George Brown; and last but not the least was the attempt made by one of the giants of Canadian public life, Sir John Alexander Macdonald.

My hon. friend (Mr. Sproule), referring to the campaign of 1891, said that Sir John Macdonald then declared that if Canada would again return him to power, he would be ready to again approach the American authorities on this question, and particularly Mr. Blaine who was then Secretary of State in the United States, in order to obtain a renewal of the treaty of 1854. In this my hon. friend is right, but where he was wrong was when he said that the policy of reciprocity was defeated at the polls in 1891. It was not. The policy which was defeated at the polls in 1891 was quite different from that of the present government. The policy of the present government is a restricted policy of reciprocity.

Mr. SPROULE. Is not that exactly what I said, namely, that the Reform party went to the country on unrestricted reciprocity, and the Conservative party on a policy of limited reciprocity, and the country decided in favour of the latter.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Yes, and now that these hon. gentlemen are getting it, they are not satisfied.

Mr. SPROULE. We needed it then, but not now.

Mr. LEMIEUX. What was the attitude of Sir John Macdonald in 1891? My memory of those days is evergreen because I began my political life in 1891, and addressed many meetings in the province of Quebec in favour of the policy of the Liberal party. I quite remember that from 1887 until 1891, the then leader of the opposition, who is now the leader of this government, (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), and Sir Richard Cartwright, Minister of Trade and Commerce, and my hon. friend the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher), offered to this House resolution after resolution in favour of reciprocity—not of unrestricted reciprocity because that policy culminated only in 1891. But they offered resolution after resolution in favour of a policy of reciprocity of whatever form or kind with the United States. Year after year these resolutions were rejected. I shall not say that they were rejected by the servile majority of the day, but they were rejected by the followers of Sir John Macdonald from 1887 down to 1891. When, however, Sir John Macdonald saw that the tide was rising in the country and that his party would be swept by the wave of public opinion in favour of reciprocity, he suddenly, before the parliamentary term had expired, dissolved

Mr. LEMIEUX.