

The sentence in the minister's speech on which the press bases its opinion is this: "It is our desire to trade freely with any and all who are willing to trade with us." Was there any suggestion of retaliation in that statement? In order to understand clearly what the minister meant by these words we should keep in mind what has gone before. In 1911 the American government, under a Republican president, offered Canada better trade relations. The government of the day was about to accept, but it was defeated at the polls, and a government of the party represented by hon. gentlemen opposite came into power. They refused that offer. They refused it, not politely but rudely, churlishly, boorishly. They said to the Americans, "We don't want to have any truck or trade with you."

Mr. McGIBBON: Does my hon. friend know that everything in that treaty was given later and that they did not keep to it six months?

Mr. YOUNG (Weyburn): I am coming to that. A short time after, the American government, under a Democratic president this time, gave us free of charge many of the things contained in that treaty. This was the second gesture in the way of friendly relations made to us by the people of the United States. The same party was in power in Canada then, and how did they respond that time? Was there any talk then of retaliation? Was there any talk then of paying them back in kind, when they reduced their tariff against us? When they reduced their tariff did that party in Canada say, "We will respond"? They said, "No; we have those Yankees where we want them. We have made them give us something and we have given them nothing in exchange."

Mr. McGIBBON: Does the hon. gentleman make that statement seriously, that we gave them nothing in return?

Mr. YOUNG (Weyburn): I said, that is what your party said.

Mr. McGIBBON: No, they did not.

Mr. YOUNG (Weyburn): That party openly boasted that they had secured from the Americans what we expected to secure from them in 1911 and that they had not given them anything in exchange. Now, there were two separate occasions on which the people on the other side of the line made friendly offers of better trade relations with this country, both of which were rejected by the party opposite.

Now let us come back to the statement of the Minister of Finance. What did it mean?

It was an intimation to the United States government that if they are still in that humour, if they are still disposed to have better trade relations with this country, they will find us in a more amiable mood, ready to trade with them. As the minister said, "We are willing to trade freely with all those who are willing trade with us." That was not a threat of retaliation. It was an olive branch, held out to a country which had twice held out the olive branch to us.

Mr. MANION: Is my hon. friend making that statement authoritatively? I see the Minister of Finance in his seat, and he does not contradict it. Is that the interpretation we are to accept?

Mr. ROBB: Is there any objection to a statement of that kind?

Mr. MANION: I have no objection; all I want is a frank interpretation of the statement.

Mr. ROBB: The hon. gentleman is making his speech.

Mr. MANION: The minister does not deny it and we will accept that interpretation.

Mr. McMILLAN: There is nothing wrong about that.

Mr. YOUNG (Weyburn): I am accused of having a definite aim in life. I think it was the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Barber) who said that my ambition was to destroy the fruit and vegetable industry. In reply to that, all I have to say is that it is the ancient privilege of a man who has no case to abuse his opponent. But in all these matters of the tariff I frankly confess that my concern is for the interest of the consumer. I believe with Bastiat that all economic questions should be studied from the consumer's standpoint, for the consumer's interests are the interests of the human race. Let me repeat these words, for I want them to soak in. "Study all economic questions from the consumer's standpoint, for the consumer's interests are the interests of the human race." What after all is prosperity? In what does it consist? Does it not consist in having plenty of everything for everybody? Commodities good, cheap and abundant, so cheap and so abundant that everyone can enjoy them? And every measure you take to increase the volume of commodities in the country and to lower prices widens the circle of people who are enabled to enjoy the use of those commodities, and is a step in the direction of prosperity. On the other hand, every measure you take to restrict the volume