

is in favour of a measure of reciprocity. He is in favour of free trade in natural products, and, perhaps, *plus X*. He thinks that will not endanger British connection, but he thinks if we have free trade in manufactured articles, it would endanger British connection, it would interfere with our political relations with our neighbours to the south and with the mother country. Why, then, was the mission to Washington undertaken? The hon. gentleman says that you may raise a horse and sell him to an American, you may send him across the border, and the institutions of this country, as British institutions, will not be impaired; but if you manufacture a harness and put it on that horse and send the horse and harness together across the border, without either being taxed, there is danger of the constitution being pulled down. You may send a hide across the border and no political injury will follow, but if you convert that hide into leather and send it across the border irreparable mischief will be the consequence. You may send wool and no harm is done, but if it is spun and manufactured into cloth and sent across the border, what?—it will wear down the constitution. That is the argument that the hon. gentleman, with a good deal of vehemence, addressed to the electors of this country, and he seriously asks this House to accept it as conclusive on this question of our political relations with our neighbours. Sir, I do not hold the right hon. gentleman's views. I have greater faith in the common sense of the people of this country. I say that from the course the Government have pursued during the last twelve years, property has greatly depreciated in value, the income of the population has largely diminished, the people have become discontented, and, in my opinion, poverty and discontent are more powerful contributors towards revolutionary changes than are any of those important fiscal changes which we have spoken of from this side of the House. The hon. gentleman knows that one-fifth of the population of this country has crossed the boundary line, and so far as they are concerned, annexation is an accomplished fact. They have not taken the territory, but they have taken what is more valuable than territory, they have taken the brains, and the muscle, and the sinew, and the energies which would serve to build up and contribute to the greatness of this country; they have taken them abroad and made them a part and parcel of a neighbouring nation. The hon. gentleman should also bear in mind another thing that flows from what has taken place: he should bear in mind that when you have one-fifth of those born in Canada on the American side who have become citizens of the United States, you have done a great deal towards making the two peoples one people; you have associated them in personal interest, as they are associated in personal affection and in all those feelings that relationship creates. It is of all the more consequence, and the impression is growing stronger in this country that it is of great consequence, that we should become commercially, as far as possible, one people, as we have become one in blood, and in kin, and in domestic association. Then there is another thing that should be borne in mind: that while commercial relations, extended as they would be under a system of free trade, would do a great deal towards the abolition of ill-feeling and national rivalry between this country and the United States,

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell).

and would so far contribute towards union, they also, by increasing the prosperity of our people, would contribute to their contentment, and contentment is never a powerful instrument in the production of revolutionary changes. When the people are more contented revolutionary changes are more difficult. We are far less likely to alter our political relations if we become more prosperous in consequence of our more intimate relations with the United States, than we would by remaining in a condition of isolation and a condition of poverty. There is much force in the observation made some years ago by Prof. Goldwin Smith, that Canada was, to some extent, the ragged edge cut off from the American Republic. We are not a continuous country as is the United States; we are of very much less depth; the chances of our people east and west trading with one another are far less than are the chances of their trading with the people of the United States in their own immediate vicinity, if no impediment were placed in the way of trade. The assiduous attempts made during the past ten years to prevent trade between the two countries, so far from creating in this country a distinct nationality, have tended to create discontent and to favour those conditions which must contribute towards those political changes which the hon. gentleman thinks are not desirable. I believe our constitutional system, fairly carried out, is a more satisfactory system of government than theirs, but I should like a more satisfactory Administration than has been given during the past twelve years. I do not think the First Minister has made the best impression that could be made in favour of our political system; but if he wishes that system to be maintained, he should not desire to impose on the people a condition of perpetual inferiority, of poverty and isolation. The people will follow their material interests, and those who contribute to the creation of a state of prosperity for the people, will do most to bring about political contentment, and place an impediment in the way of great and radical changes. For these reasons, I am opposed to the policy which the First Minister has seen proper hitherto to pursue, and I think the proposition made by my hon. friend near me should be accepted as the easiest way out of the difficulty, and the one most conducive to the public interests. It may be one humiliating for the Government to adopt, but that is their fault, and their fault should not be made a public misfortune. It is of the first importance to this country, that we should have extensive trade relations with the neighbouring Republic, and we can only have them on the condition of granting free trade. I do not believe that the question of revenue is such a difficult one as the Minister of Finance endeavours to make it appear. I say this: that if he finds it impossible to promote the best interests of the country in this way, he must give place to those who can, for if hon. gentlemen on this side of the House cross to the Treasury benches, I can promise there will be no difficulty whatever in meeting the ordinary requirements of the country, and at the same time establishing unrestricted trade with the neighbouring Republic.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I would ask my hon. friend opposite (Mr. Laurier), whether it is the intention to divide the House on the motion?