

given to the United States without any compensation to us at all.

There is another aspect of the question. It was said, and there was a little force in it, that we not only gave these concessions to France in return for favours, but that we gave them, through the favoured-nation treaties of olden time, to a number of other countries without receiving any specific concession. Now, these other countries which enjoy the French treaty by virtue of the old favoured-nation treaties are for the most part unimportant. There are some of them with which we have a considerable trade, but most of them, certainly one-half of them, are countries with which we have little or no trade, and they cannot come into competition with the United States. But they have received these privileges, not by virtue of any treaty we have ourselves made with them, but by virtue of the favoured-nation clause which was found in old treaties made very many years ago by the British authorities at a time when the colonies had not attained to their present status. It is hardly necessary to remind the House that Great Britain no longer makes any commercial treaties concerning Canada without first obtaining the consent and concurrence of Canada; but these old treaties remaining in operation from many years ago do contain that clause, and as they have not been denounced, it became necessary we should grant to a number of these countries the same privileges as we granted to France.

We were able to point out to our friends of the United States that they probably could have stood in the same position as these other countries, and that if they were not in the same position, it was because they had never been willing to accept the British idea of what favoured-nation treaties meant; that they had always preferred to stand outside—

Mr. J. A. CURRIE. What is the British idea?

Mr. FIELDING. The British idea does not insist on favour for favour. The British idea holds—and our American friends just now are disposed to use it up to a certain point—that if you give to France, for example, a certain concession and you get from France a return for it, if you have a favoured-nation treaty with another country you are bound to give these favours to the other country without demanding a return. The essence of it is that you must give these other countries the best terms that are going. The Americans have never accepted that rule. They have never come into the family of favoured nations in that respect, and they could not now complain if, because of their own action and policy in relation to that question, they have not stood in as good a position as some other countries. However, beneath it all there

Mr. FIELDING.

was the point that Canada was bound to insist on her right to make these treaties without stopping to consider whether or not they would be agreeable to another country, and we have endeavoured to insist on that right all through.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Will the minister pardon me if I ask him here if the United States government, as a result of these negotiations, has abandoned its contention that the reciprocal relations between Canada and another country are to be construed as bringing Canada within the clause which puts her under the higher tariff?

Mr. FIELDING. I think that the information which I will give to the House as to the concessions which we propose to make will answer my hon. friend's question. It will show that we are going to receive from the United States the advantages of the minimum tariff, but that we do not propose to grant to the United States all that we have granted to France and other favoured-nation countries.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Then they have abandoned the claim they have made?

Mr. FIELDING. I think that when the President issues his proclamation this afternoon that will constitute an abandonment of the claim. At the same time, I do not wish to interpret the actions of our neighbours to the south. When we receive the advantages of the minimum tariff and they issue their proclamation accordingly, I consider that that will constitute an abandonment of the claim that they are entitled to receive whatever favours we give to other countries. We certainly do not admit that claim, and have taken pains to put that fact on record. At the same time, I do not wish to interpret their attitude; but when they grant us the advantages of the minimum tariff, and receive from us in return, not all the concessions of the French treaty, but a small part of them, I consider that that constitutes an abandonment of any contention that they have a right to interfere with our liberty in treaty-making.

The next stage of this matter arose in connection with the visit of President Taft to Albany to take part in an interesting function to which the Governor General of Canada was also invited. Albany may be considered a half-way house between Washington and Ottawa, and it came to our knowledge that the President had expressed a desire to take up this matter personally, and would be pleased if arrangements could be made that he might himself discuss the matter with representatives of the Canadian government.

Mr. J. D. REID. Who advised the government of his desire?