

in their intelligence. He has no confidence in their virtues. He distrusts them altogether, and he is not content with distrusting them, but he flaunts his distrust in the face of the people of Canada. Consequently, when there is an alternative, when the Minister of Justice makes a solemn statement in Toronto, when he gives official utterance, speaking as a Minister of the Crown, as to how these negotiations were commenced and how they were carried on, and on the other hand there is a letter sent by Mr. Blaine to a Mr. Baker saying some things that were true and not stating others, the hon. gentleman says: "I believe Mr. Blaine and not the Minister." A similar statement was made in the city of St. John by a late colleague of the hon. gentleman who is no longer in this House, who referred to the same matter and said, I prefer to believe Mr. Blaine. He believed Mr. Blaine, and he stays home with a majority of nearly a thousand against him. I think, if my hon. friend will allow me to tell him so, it would be well for him to trust the Canadian people a little more, and even to trust the Canadian Ministers when they make grave statements on their responsibilities as Ministers of the Crown. The position of the Government is consistent throughout. My hon. friend may go back in the history of trade negotiations with the United States from earliest times, and he will find that the policy of the Liberal-Conservative party has been entirely consistent. There has been no period when the Conservative Government has not been in favour of a fair and equitable reciprocity treaty, such, for instance, as we believe the treaty of 1854 to have been. We stand still on that platform. Attempt after attempt has been made to obtain such a fair and equitable arrangement. Since the abrogation of that treaty of 1854 attempts have been made—I suppose half a dozen of them—to get the United States to discuss with us the question of trade relations on the ground of what we believed to be fair and equitable. With the exception of the George Brown Reciprocity Draft, which met with an ignoble fate in the Senate of the United States, from that time to the present the United States Government has not intimated any desire to make arrangements of a satisfactory nature for trade relations with the people of Canada. In 1887-88, when the plenipotentiaries were in Washington to negotiate a treaty in regard to the fisheries, the proposal was made by Sir Charles Tupper to settle all difficulties on the basis of an equitable trade arrangement, and it was rejected. The papers will show that last November an opportunity did arise, a door was opened, no matter what my hon. friend has said to-night to the contrary, by which Canada had the opportunity to remind the United States, not simply that it was in favour of reciprocity, but that it always had been in favour of reciprocity, and that it had not changed its mind; and, if my hon. friend had studied the official papers as he seems to have studied the emanations from the party press, he would have seen a document passed by the Government of Canada, the Order in Council which was sent home to Great Britain, which was sent by Great Britain to the United States Government, which was the basis upon which we proposed to enter upon the negotiations for trade arrangements. I think that has appeared in almost every newspaper in the country.

Mr. FOSTER.

Mr. CHARLTON. When was that document laid before the United States Government?

Mr. FOSTER. If my hon. friend will contain himself a little, he will get still more information than he has now, and which, if he follows the lines followed by my hon. friend from South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) this evening, he seems to be in need of. That document embodies the basis upon which the Government of Canada proposes to enter upon negotiations with the United States. That has been before the Government of the United States for months, and upon that have followed the other steps in the negotiations. I wish to say, without going into particulars as to what the papers will show, that, notwithstanding all the pleasantries of my hon. friend, we did not go down to Washington without invitation, but we went on the very day and at the very hour when we were invited to go there by the Secretary of State himself. Whatever may have arisen afterwards, however it may have been thought desirable to postpone the negotiations to the 12th October or any other date, the Canadian Government is not responsible for that and the Liberal-Conservative party cannot be blamed for it. The Government showed itself consistent, in the first place, by declaring that there was a door open for negotiations, and that a delegation would be sent to Washington after the 4th March, and, furthermore, by sending a delegation and being prepared to go again on the 12th October to do what no Canadian Government has been asked to do from 1866 to the present time, that is, to talk over the trade matters and relations existing between this country and the United States, with a view to their better and final settlement. This statement which I make will be borne out by the papers, and I cannot see where we have been inconsistent or where we have prejudiced the interests of Canada or have done aught which any Government in favour of reciprocity ought not to have done. Wherever the door has been opened we have entered it. If the negotiations have not progressed so far as to show tangible results, the Government is not at fault. There may be some reasons behind, which may be brought out later, why such negotiations have not been more quickly brought to a successful conclusion. Now, my hon. friend evidently had before his mind the fact that a large number of the members of this House are here for the first time, and he also appears to remember that they had probably never read one of his speeches, and consequently he thought it was his duty to-night to retail the better parts of some four or five speeches that he had made in this House in order to fortify their minds. These have been answered, it is not necessary to answer them again. He has taken up the course of Canada with reference to the United States, and has striven to show from his standpoint, from his place of grave utterance, from his position which commands the attention of the people here and of people in the United States and in other parts of the world—he has tried to show that Canada, that the Canadian Government, has been the aggressor, has been in fault, has tried to prejudice the relations between the United States and Canada, and has done so almost with malice prepense and aforethought, and has by that means made it impossible for the United States to meet us in nego-