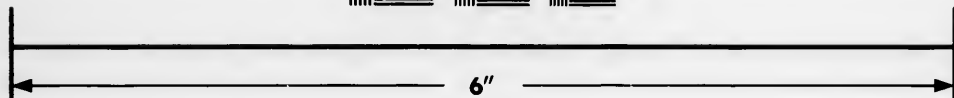
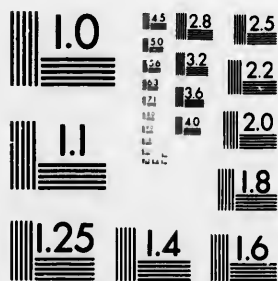


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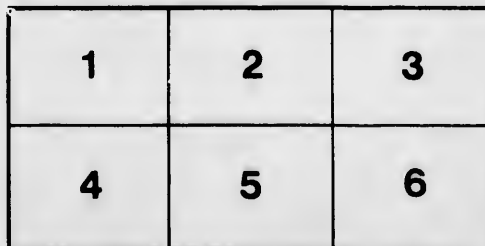
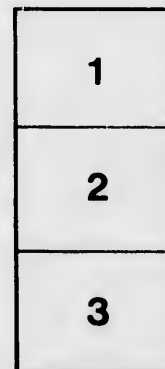
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House of Commons Debates.

SECOND SESSION—SEVENTH PARLIAMENT.

SPEECH OF THE HON. DAVID MILLS

ON THE

957  
30/11/92  
Right of Canada to make her own Treaties

OTTAWA, 7th APRIL, 1892

SUPPLY—COMMERCIAL TREATIES.

Mr. FOSTER moved that the House again resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Mr. Speaker, I am about to submit to the House a motion of very great importance, a motion which, in my opinion, the House would be wanting in its duty to the country if it fails to support. I am about to ask the House to declare that the time has come when commercial treaties, in the interests of Canada, should be negotiated by persons who are responsible to the Government of Canada and for whose acts the advisers of the Crown in Canada should be held responsible to the House of Commons. We have often, within these walls, had drawn for us bright word pictures of our immense area, telling us how we spanned the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and how we stretched from the fertile regions of the temperate zone far into the regions of perpetual frost. We have had presented to us glowing word pictures of the teeming millions who, at no distant day, are to fill the waste places, and to turn what is now a solitude into fruitful fields, dotted with towns and cities, filled with a busy and prosperous population. But after these delightful anticipations are realized, even our national powers are to remain the same as they are at present; are to remain stationary, our political disabilities are to continue, and our political life and actions are to operate within the limits fixed

by the events and by the conditions of a period long since passed. Though the country may grow to the thought, feeling and stature of manhood, there must be no constitutional growth corresponding with the general progress in wealth and population of the country. I repudiate this doctrine; I maintain that it is one inimical to our progress and opposed to the genius of our institutions. Mr. Speaker, the time has come when the gentlemen on the Treasury benches ought to deal candidly with the House; they ought to make their position on this subject of commercial treaties, perfectly intelligible to the House and to the country. If I rightly understand them, it is their contention that our foreign trade relations must, as long as we remain a part of the Empire, continue in other hands than ours, so in their opinion we must choose between British connection and self-government beyond that measure of self-government which we already possess. We must consent to leave forever the regulation of our foreign trade in other hands, or we must submit to being put out of the British family and left to protect ourselves from foreign encroachment. I do not know whether, if this alternative was the necessary result of the proposition which I maintain, that it would seriously menace our future prospects; but I deny altogether that any such alternative is before us arising out of this subject. That such an alternative is involved has often been asserted, but no attempt has ever been made to sustain this

contention by rational argument. When representative government was demanded by the people of this colony half a century ago, the same assertion was made, the same kind of argument was used, against the demand which was then thought reasonable. It was asked, how a governor could be controlled by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and at the same time follow the advice of a Colonial Administration? The demand, it was said, was incompatible with the unity of the Empire, and so the Reformers of that day were stigmatized Republicans in search of a pretext for putting an end to British authority on this continent. Such, Sir, was the contention of that period. No doubt the connection was endangered, not, however, from acquiescence in the proposed reform, but from the resistance with which that reform was long met. We had reached a state of maturity when it was no longer possible to keep the people of the country in leading-strings, it was no longer possible to persuade them tamely to submit to the perpetuation of the political abuses against which they at that time protested. Our fathers were told, as we have been told, of the greatness of the parent state, the advantages of its protection, the wisdom of its statesmen, the duty of implicit obedience, and the wickedness of discontent. They were urged to venerate the old flag, to uphold the old system, and to stand by the old families. The advice sounded amazingly like the advice which, with equal disinterestedness and with equal patriotic devotion, was, a little more than a year ago, proclaimed from the rostrum and reiterated by the newspapers of hon. gentlemen who now sit upon your right. But in spite of this defence of the ancient system, it was overthrown. The demands for reform were conceded, and the constitutional changes which were long sought by the leaders of the Reform party, were brought into practical operation. Every one in this country, whether in the House or out of it, knows with what effect these changes were brought into practical operation. None of the evil consequences which were confidently predicted, came to pass. Instead of the disorders such as we were told would arise, there was contentment; the bonds of union between the colony and the parent state were strengthened, the affections of the people everywhere took the place of military garrisons. Nothing perished but the ascendancy of those who had subordinated the

general public interest to their own pecuniary or personal advancement. No doubt the men who, for a long period of years, had become acquainted with, or had become habituated to, a certain official routine, to the exercise of a certain kind of authority, were loath to give up that authority; they had confounded themselves with the political institutions of the country. Such men do not well see how the machine of government is to be worked without them. They are like the hangman in "Barnaby Rudge" who, when he was condemned to death, asked that he might be spared for the sake of the constitution. These men did not see how the affairs of the Government could be carried on in their absence. Now, these gentlemen do not say they are the state, but they do regard themselves as a necessary part of its governmental machinery. Our trans-atlantic officials who, in the progress of the colonies, are from time to time deprived of a portion of their authority, and who are, therefore, opposed to change, do not, nevertheless, exhibit the same ardour or the same fervour in opposing the constitutional reforms that are demanded, that are sometimes exhibited with less excusable reasons by hon. gentlemen on this side of the Atlantic. They do not employ very strong arguments in support of the ancient regime; they do not use the old man, or misuse the old flag, nor think they may successfully resist those who are using their best endeavours to adjust the institutions of the country with the requirements of their time, and who assiduously labour to prevent the functions of government from being perverted to the service of unworthy objects. Now, Mr Speaker, I affirm that we have once more outgrown the limits of the authority with which we have for a long time been content. Communities, like persons, have their periods of infancy, of youth and of manhood. Nations are not formed in a day. The attributes which go to make a people into a nation cannot be assumed at will. The sovereignty of states is not a matter of legislation, or of official determination. States grow up by slow degrees from the condition of dependency to that of a sovereignty. They are not legislative contrivances called into existence by the unscrupulous ambition of one class of public men or by the patriotism of another and a different class; they are bodies of organic growth. From the dawn of their political life they have vital forces operating from

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within and environing influences operating from without, which, as they progress in wealth and in population, give them an ever-increasing degree of complexity and create an ever-increasing necessity for an extension of their administrative, their executive and their legislative authority. They enter the society of nations whenever the time comes that they feel the want, and are prepared to undertake the responsibility which international obligations impose. It is not the intellectual capacity of the people, it is not a high degree of intelligence on their part, it is not high culture, it is not the strength of their moral fibre, it is not their industrial habits alone, or all these together, that determine whether a community is entitled to sovereign authority or whether it is not. These are important factors, no doubt, in determining the use which a state will make of the authority which it claims, and with which it is invested. But government is a practical want, and we have no assurance that the powers of government will be wisely used any further than the necessity for those powers actually are felt. These powers are limited in various ways: by the pecuniary condition of the population, by their physical circumstances, by their industrial progress, by their external relations, political and commercial. Where there is little wealth accumulated necessity compels people who exercise political power to use their resources in the direction of their most pressing wants. Those which are most severely felt are those which are usually first provided for. We do not, nor ought we to seek to claim for a political community power without responsibility. I need not stop to point out the abuses which would be certain to arise if one government were to decide on the measure of expenditure and another government were required to provide the means by which these obligations were to be met. If government be a matter of growth, it is sufficient that the powers which we possess should be such as to enable us to meet by practical legislation, and by executive authority, all our wants and all our necessities. It is out of these phases that a state grows in power, as it grows in the extent of its interest, and that there arises the difference between a territorial and provincial government under our constitution. It is out of these phases of political growth that the difference between a territorial and a state government arises under the constitution of

the United States. These distinctions grow out of the circumstances of the population and are recognized but are not created by law. What is proper at one time in a community may have been improper at an earlier period, and it is because of this increasing degree of complexity, and the corresponding extension of authority which ought to accompany that complexity, that we say that one colony of the Empire may rightly claim to be entrusted with authority which cannot be fairly claimed by another colony. One of the best known maxims of the English common law is that a colony of British subjects carry with them into a distant portion of the Queen's dominions so much of the law of England as may be suited to their circumstances. No matter how well informed the members of that community may be, they do not carry with them the whole body of the English law. There is much of it they have no use for. There is much of it that is the necessary accident of the historical growth of the parent state. There is much of it that grew out of the conditions of early government which do not prevail in the parent state in modern times. So these features, these provisions of the law, are not carried with the colony. There is no constitutional rule which withholds from a colony of British subjects any particular power or authority which they may reasonably claim, and which they may claim as necessary for the promotion of their interests and the protection of their rights. There may be conditions and circumstances in a new colony of Englishmen or of British subjects so different from anything that exists in the parent state, that there is nothing in the body of the law which they carry with them, there is nothing in the law which they left behind them, which will adequately meet their wants. But they are not left, under the English constitutional system, helpless. They carry with them, not only certain provisions of the law which are suited to their circumstances, but they carry with them as a part of the common law the power to call into existence the machinery by which the law may be amended, by which it may be supplemented, by which it may be adjusted to their wants and their circumstances. The common law is said to be the perfection of reason, and it would fall very far short of this if a British subject did not carry with him into a new colony that part of the law which confers on him the rights and privi-

leges of a freeman, freedom from taxation without his consent, the right to counsel his Sovereign, either personally or by representation, the right to give his consent to any change in the law of the province by which he is to be governed. The common law in the United Kingdom does not confer on the Crown in the colony by settlement any greater authority than the Crown has over the subject in the parent state. What the Crown cannot do in the parent state without the aid of the legislature the Crown cannot do in the colony without like aid. The Crown cannot impose a tax alone. It cannot do so by the aid of the Legislative Council; it can only do so by consent of the party personally or by his consent through representation in Parliament in the colony assembled. In the very nature of things there are immense fields within the limits of which the colony does not legislate. It makes no attempt to legislate, not because the power has been withheld under the authority of the common law, not because power has been taken away by any Imperial enactment, but because it is shut out by its local and peculiar circumstances, by the simple character of its wants and by the interest of the population. If you look, Sir, at the condition of the colony, you will find that the administration of civil justice largely relates to matters that are of a simple character and are easily understood. You will find that the expenditures on the objects of government are in the first instance mostly municipal. There are roads and bridges to build, harbours to protect, the education of the children of the community to provide for, courts of justice to establish, the navigation of rivers to improve, roads connecting the different settlements of the interior with each other and with the coast, to make. These are usually the matters which first occupy the attention of a colony of Englishmen; not because in a new country their rights are more limited than they are in the parent state; but because they have fewer political interests. We see in a colony the state in the process of formation, and the public duties, and the public functions of a higher order are of a later growth. There are a hundred things which the sovereign state is called upon to deal with, but with which the colony has for a long series of years no concern. Now, this power of government increases with the necessities of the population. Power and responsibility, under

the English constitutional system, go hand in hand, and the same thing may be affirmed of power and necessity arising from the growth of a colony towards nationality. The first of these is evoked by the parent state for the purpose of upholding and maintaining its superintendence over the Empire; the second, the power arising from necessity, the colony invokes for the extension of its authority and for the rational adjustment of its freedom in accordance with its wants and with its interests. Power, at the first age of colonial existence, is often wisely exercised by the parent state, which at a later period, if serious abuses are not to grow up, must be transferred to the colony itself, as a part of the power which is necessary to the maintenance of the principles of self-government. The boundary line between the authority of the parent state and the colony under our constitutional system, is not a fixed limitary line, but a varying line which alters its position in proportion as the wealth and population of the colony increases, and as the circumstances of the colony are altered. The political horizon of a colony in its infancy is necessarily very near, but as the colony advances in civilization, in population, and in wealth, the political horizon recedes, the area embraced within the authority of colonial legislation and government is increased, and the authority of the parent state over the colonies is proportionately diminished. In other words, the Imperial Parliament and the administrative officers of the parent state, are by the necessities of the colony relieved of a part of their trust. That is the position. Where the colony had no interest at all in the subject, or where it had no interest distinct from that of the parent state, the parent state may without injury, or inconvenience, or any sense of oppression, and without any danger of friction, exercise such authority. But, Sir, in the growth of colonies the time comes where the way parts; and a colony may take one road in its interest, and the parent state may continue on the other. It is perfectly clear that whenever that condition of things arises that the colony can no longer afford, with regard to that particular matter, to allow the authority to remain with the parent state, without having its interests subordinated and sacrificed to those of the superior authority. Therefore, if you examine, Mr. Speaker, the progress of colonial government under the English constitutional system, you will find



that in every case where representative government has been established, the theoretical principle which I have just stated exactly corresponds with the historical facts. There is no exception; it is a necessary consequence of growth under our system; the freer that system is, the less interference there is; the more promptly concession is made by the parent state to the wants of the colony, and the more clearly they are laid before the parent state, the less will be the friction, and the stronger the bond of union between them. Now, Sir, no one would venture to argue before a judicial tribunal that when a person comes to a point where his interest and his duty are on opposite sides, that he may be safely left to go against his interests in discharge of a duty. The rule which has been recognized as an elementary rule in the principles of jurisprudence is equally applicable in the administration of public affairs. Every one knows that gross abuses would spring up if that rule of law were abolished. Now, this rule, I say, is equally applicable to the conduct of the administration of the affairs of the state. Experience shows that the rule of fair dealing is more readily applied in private than in public affairs, and that the public conscience is less sensitive than the individual conscience. This is the necessary result from the fact that the individual stands alone against the whole community, and in matters of public interest it frequently happens that one-half the community, in political ethics as well as in questions of public policy, stands against the other half; so that rules of upright dealings are more readily applied as between one individual and another than between any individual and the state, or between one state and another. Public opinion always comes more promptly to the support of the public as against the individual, than it does in one state against another. Take the case of some matter in which an Imperial officer is undertaking to act for a province. Is it not perfectly clear that in such a case there is in the first place a disposition to maintain things as they are? But, under disinclination to change and that strong interest which the parent state has in maintaining things as they are, a public wrong is often shielded by the ignorance, by the indifference, by the self-interest, by the false political maxims which have become current in the community with regard to the particular subject which is regarded as a grievance. In the case of one entrusted with

authority in the parent state, there comes to the support of that official the public opinion of a very numerous community—of a community who undertake to maintain the existence of the office and the functions of the officer upon the ground that they have existed for a long series of years. And so we frequently find that the best interests of a province are held in check by the maintenance of the authority of some Imperial officer, whose functions ought to come to an end, and whose duty should be superseded by some other in authority. An official in the United Kingdom, in the discharge of his duty abroad, can never be able to give more than a subordinate place to colonial matters which are not also matters of great Imperial concern. But, Sir, we are met at this point by the objection that the external relations of all parts of the Empire must ever remain in the hands of Her Majesty's advisers at Westminster; that no other rule can be reconciled with the unity and stability of the Empire. This, Sir, it seems to me, is simply begging the question in dispute. I deny it. Were the contention well founded, it would only prove this, that the destiny of the British Empire is that its colonies shall reach a period of maturity, and that the Empire shall then fall to pieces. The doctrine of Imperial supremacy, and of Imperial superintendence, was stated about a year ago with great force and precision by Lord Salisbury. In discussing the action of the Imperial Government towards Newfoundland in its dispute with the Government of France, Lord Salisbury made these observations in defence of interference by Imperial authorities. He said:

“We give them (the Newfoundland people) unlimited power in respect to their internal affairs because they will be the people who will suffer if they make a mistake. Therefore it is right that they should be in such matters independent. But if they make a dangerous mistake in this matter, it is not they who will suffer. It is we who run the whole risk, and they hardly any risk at all. I do not suppose that in case of war with France, the French would take the trouble to invade Newfoundland. And this being our risk, the whole burden and responsibility falling upon us, we should have the necessary power to defend our interests and our fellow subjects, and also comply with international law, to fulfil international obligations, and to satisfy the pledged word of the country.”

Now, I accept this statement as a true ethical and constitutional basis for Imperial supremacy and Imperial superintendence. It is a

partial statement of the conditions under which that supremacy may give place to colonial sovereignty. It may be superseded, on account of local dangers or local interests, by local authority. The circumstances under which this transference of authority takes place from the Imperial Parliament and Imperial officers to the officers and authorities in a dependency, I shall undertake to state later. When, Sir, we first set out to give practical effect to our claim to self-government, we confined our demands to our domestic affairs; we limited those demands by our local interests. We did so because these were sufficient at that time to meet all our governmental wants. They are not such, however, as to meet the wants of a community such as we have now become. We have many evidences of this. Why, Sir, what meant that attempt at negotiation with France by the Government of this country a few years ago? What meant the abortive negotiations of the Government of Canada with the Government of Spain? What meant the demand on the Imperial Government by the Government of this country recently, that in the appointment of a commission to negotiate with the United States on the subject of our fisheries, our commercial relations, and all other matters of interest existing between the two countries, which were of common concern to us and them, the Government of Canada should be represented. I say, Sir, that these things show that we are no longer a colony such as we once were, that we are no longer an infantile community, but a state possessing the instincts and interests which belong to a people who must be regarded in some respects as a sovereign people. Do they not show, Sir, that we believe ourselves to be the best guardians of our own interests? Do they not show that in respect of all those matters in which we have external relations, we believe that we can do more for ourselves than others can do for us? Sir, what meant the excursion of the hon. Minister of Finance to the West Indies sixteen months ago? It may be that the hon. gentleman accomplished nothing; but he hoped to accomplish something when he set out. It may be that the strength of the hon. Minister of Finance does not lie in the field of diplomacy. Whether the hon. Minister went to the West Indian Islands of his own free will, or whether in a moment of weakness he yielded to the pressing demands and importunities of his colleagues, I do not

think it is a matter of much consequence to enquire. However this may be, the Minister of Finance set out on his voyage for the purpose of dealing with the relations between this country and those West Indian Islands. If those relations are not very intimate at the present time, the hon. Minister of Finance and his colleagues, at whose instance he went, must have thought that it was desirable that those relations should be more intimate. But, Sir, the hon. gentleman, in going upon that journey, with the approbation of his colleagues, assumed that the commercial relations of Canada with other countries were matters that properly fell within the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada, and he acted upon that assumption. It is true that the countries which he visited were British possessions; but, Sir, if it was proper to go to the Island of Jamaica or to the Province of Guiana for the purpose of extending the trade of this country, it would have been equally proper to have gone to Mexico, to Colombia, or to Brazil. I was with the external relations of the country that he undertook to deal. It was not political affiliation that he was seeking in his visit to Jamaica, but wider markets. It must be assumed that in those visits he sought to promote the interests of the people of Canada, to contribute to their prosperity, and to add to their wealth. What the Minister aimed at, he did not accomplish. The action of the Government proved, however, another proposition besides the one which I have immediately before me; it proved the further proposition that Canada has not become a self-contained country, capable of consuming all that it can produce, and of producing all that it can consume. This was one of the promises hon. gentlemen made in connection with their fiscal policy, and this promise has not been redeemed. It has, on the contrary, signally failed. I pass by that, however, for the present, and simply call the attention of the House to the fact, that the story of the wanderings of this Minister, who sailed over the sea and then sailed back again, has not yet seen the light. This silence is suggestive and ominous. It shows that the Minister feels his political excursion did not bring the Government glory nor the country gain. The Ministers have shown that they did not want closer trade relations with the neighbouring republic. They did not, in the interests of Canada, desire that our people should look to the

United States for anything. They hoped that this West Indian voyage would enable them to promise such an extension of trade as would quiet the mutterings of discontent which, previous to the elections of last year, were being heard. The hon. gentleman would have preferred negotiations with Russia, China, Timbuctoo, or any other country on the globe rather than with the country on our immediate borders. Before his wanderings began, the whole Administration, or a large number of them at least, paid a visit to the Maritime Provinces. They knew before they started that there was discontent; they knew there was distress; they knew there were the mutterings of complaint which precede a coming storm. And so the hon. gentlemen pondered these things in their hearts, and in their eastern observations felt called upon to consider what measure of relief, other than reciprocity with the neighbouring republic, they could offer the people of Canada, which would enable them to retain the confidence of the country. They were anxious to discover a solution, no doubt, but a solution other than that which most obviously presented itself; and so, after this eastern excursion, after viewing the ground upon our eastern border, the hon. gentleman set out upon this West India voyage. He visited the Leeward Islands, the Windward Islands, and, if I remember rightly, also the mainland. Everywhere he failed in his negotiations. The authorities in these West Indian provinces did not like the proposition of the hon. gentleman. They thought, perhaps, that the hon. gentleman was too much like Cassius; he had a lean and hungry look; they thought, perhaps, that he offered too little and wanted too much. The matters, after his explanation, were even more mixed and muddled than they had been before; the prospects diminished of treaty arrangements with the West India Islands, which, if fulfilled, would have saved the hon. gentleman the terrible humiliation of three journeys to Washington, and also relieved them from the necessity they felt under of indulging in a good deal of not very candid talk about the traitors who are seeking to dismember the Empire by lowering taxation on the products the people consume. The hon. gentleman failed in his West Indian mission, and from hour to hour after he had visited the country the news that came here indicated that failure. There has been up to this

time, so far as I know, no attempt to lay upon the Table of this House a full statement of the hon. gentleman's visit to that country in the interests of the public service; and I have no doubt that if that correspondence and those propositions had been laid upon the Table, it would be seen that the visit of the hon. gentleman to the West Indies was really a burlesque upon negotiations. Sir, had the hon. gentlemen upon the Treasury benches any assurance whatever that there was a semblance of success in this excursion, the fire which burned so brightly upon the Conservative platforms in the beginning of the election campaign would have continued to glow until the day of the election; but the hon. gentleman was unable to hold out any hope of success, and so the defence of the National Policy, with which the campaign was opened, was not the subject-matter of discussion on the part of the hon. gentleman and his colleagues and supporters when that campaign closed. If the hon. gentleman had succeeded with a single West Indian province, we would have heard nothing during the campaign of the march upon Washington after the battle, but we would have heard a great deal of the magnificent achievements and bright prospects flowing from the hon. gentleman's visit to these happy isles. There would have been predictions, vast and vague, about the unity of the Empire, about the propriety of an imperial tariff, framed specially to exclude the Gentiles from the imperial market and to put them on a footing of inequality, or at all events a tariff specially directed against our Samaritan neighbours. But from time to time the news came that the West Indian officials were opposed to the hon. gentleman's proposition. From time to time, it was announced, first, that one and then that another of those officials were opposed to the schemes of trade which the hon. gentleman had submitted to them. When the hon. gentleman set out, he must have forgotten that the admiration for the policy of protection, which, no doubt, he sincerely entertained, and which was entertained by his colleagues, was a highly artificial habit of mind. It was like the worship of the toads and lizards in ancient Egypt, and it was not a condition of mind likely to be met with in men trained in the principles of political economy, men who imbibed their notions of commercial policy from the mother country. It was not

likely that such men would view with other feelings than those of disgust and repugnance that policy of mutual protection which the hon. gentleman sought to extend over the West India Islands. Before the elections were over, the hon. gentleman and his colleagues ceased to sing paeans in praise of the National Policy. They assured the people, in some instances, that it was a means to an end, that it was a temporary and coercive policy entered upon for the purpose of bringing Congress to its senses, and of securing from the United States a wider market and freer trade. So what was called the national policy was superseded by what was claimed to be the old policy, the larger policy, the policy which was the end towards which the national policy was but the means, and so we find that these gentlemen half persuaded their followers that this old policy, as it was called, meant Canada for the Canadians, that it meant the National Policy, that it meant anything that any class of the community might think they would like to have as a commercial policy, and so, during the progress of the electoral contest, it was announced that there were to be immediate negotiations with the President of the United States, and with the Congress after the elections were over. What for years had been pronounced an impossibility was declared to be of easy attainment, and so, immediately after the elections were over, a treaty of reciprocity was to be an accomplished fact. The 5th of March was to be a great day of victory. The Opposition were to be swept out of existence. The old party, under the old flag, accepting the old policy and led by the High Commissioner, were to march into Washington and these negotiations were to be undertaken: the farmer, despite Mr. Colby, was to have reciprocity in natural products; the manufacturers were to have protection, and trusts and combines were to be left in the care of the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wallace); the producer was to get better prices for his goods, and the consumer was to pay less, and so the electors were asked to stand by the old policy. I am not going to enter into a discussion of the old policy contained in the resolution of 1878, which, after some years, was brought out to do duty on this occasion. I am not going to show the incompatibility between that resolution and the subsequent policy, but what I wish to press

upon the attention of the House, and my reason for mentioning these matters is, that I may bring specially before you the fact that the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches were disposed to undertake the work of negotiation. They did not trust to the regular officers. They knew that England had an ambassador at Washington, an ambassador who was jealous of any interference with his functions, and, believing that what these gentlemen undertook to do fell within his exclusive domain, felt perhaps that he had a right to object to the American Government against any persons interfering except those who were specially authorized by Her Majesty's Government. Why, then, were these negotiations undertaken? Is it not a clear admission on the part of the Government that this country has grown and has acquired such dimensions and its foreign relations have acquired such a character that its interests are likely to be injured if they are not dealt with directly by representatives of the Dominion? If that is not the case, why did the hon. gentlemen undertake these negotiations? There may possibly be another explanation. If the Ministers were to speak frankly they might say that the farmers of Canada were too much in earnest to permit them to palter with this question of reciprocity. A condition of things had been reached when bananas for children and cheap raw sugar for refiners would not satisfy the great mass of the people. A condition of things had been reached when, to use the language of a former Minister of the Crown, it was useless to say that it would be detrimental to the agricultural population to have free trade in natural products with the United States. Consequently the hon. gentlemen felt that they must adopt the principle of reciprocity with the United States or they would never reach the shore without disaster. So they were compelled to abandon the National Policy, to talk reciprocity, to make their memorable visit to Washington, and then they said, this is not enough. We must proclaim our friendliness to the policy of reciprocity, and we must declare that we are prepared immediately to negotiate with the United States, and we must say that the United States have invited us to negotiate with them, or all the influences which have been used in the past elections will not be sufficiently potent to enable us to reach the shore in safety. This was the condition of

things. The founders of the National Policy superstition were wise in their generation. When the day of wrath came, they were ready to throw down their altars, where they had called on all patriotic Canadians to bring their offerings and their sacrifices for the past thirteen years. I deprecate the motives which have been alleged for this change of policy. If hon. gentlemen had been honest and sincere in endeavouring to secure reciprocity, they would never have returned to Canada empty-handed. We say that if Canada is to succeed in this matter, she must act for herself, and not by another. No matter how friendly the British ambassador may be, he acts for another country, and another Government than this, and he can never forget that the parties to whom he is responsible have different notions from ours, and the subject may not present just the same aspects to them that it does to us, and that he is not impelled to master the subject which most concerns us, nor is he compelled to consider it from our standpoint. He is not familiar with our circumstances, and never can feel as one of our own people would do. He is never in touch with the public opinion of this country, and there are barriers in the way of his ever being so placed. His want of information, his personal indifference, the absence of responsibility to us, his knowledge that mistake and failure will entail upon him no serious consequences, render him morally incapable of exercising in the highest degree that ability and skill which our interest calls for at his hands; and those things which most deeply concern us and which affect our material well-being must always be subordinated to the general interest of the Empire for which he will be held to strict responsibility. Now, the Imperial Government and the Government of Canada do not take exactly the same view of disputed questions. Take, for instance, the disputes of the Imperial Government with the United States. What they most want is the early disposition of a disagreeable dispute; they want to have it disposed of, they are ready to make large concessions to attain that end. What we want is a permanent recognition of our just rights; and that being so, it is of the first consequence that we should appoint the parties who are to have charge especially of our commercial affairs. I say this because I think that the conduct of the hon. gentlemen,

whenever those questions have arisen, shows that in practice, whatever they may have proclaimed from time to time, theoretically, on the floor of Parliament, they have admitted the soundness of the proposition for which I contend. If that be so, if the imperial officer is not competent, not qualified, from the nature of his position and the nature of his responsibility, sufficiently to care for our interests, we see why it is the hon. gentlemen constantly insist, so far as the British representative at Washington is concerned, that his labours shall always be supplemented and efficiently supported by representatives of the Government of Canada. But no matter for what reason, the fact remains that the Ministers sought to enter into direct negotiations at Washington with the Washington authorities; they did not trust to the Embassy, and by their conduct they have affirmed that the present constitutional machinery is not adequate to the requirements of a colony such as this.

It being six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

#### After Recess.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Under the circumstances which I have mentioned as to the practice of the Government in the past, I would ask whether it is not now too late longer to oppose the principle embodied in the motion which I am about to submit to this House. If it were in order to address myself to the Ministers on the Treasury benches I would say, that hitherto you have opposed, by your speeches, the principles embodied in my motion, but you have again and again practically, though fitfully, recognized the soundness of that principle. You were compelled to choose between acting on the principles suggested by this motion, and accomplishing nothing beyond preparing a Minute of Council for His Excellency to be forwarded to the Colonial Office. Sometimes the old course has been adopted, and a despatch is written, upon which no action is taken. It is left to mould in the shadows of the Colonial Office, where traditional prejudices against every kind of change are necessarily very strong. Sometimes a venerable official who may have survived from a former generation, wonders why these meddling colonies are anxious to take charge of part of their own business which has long been

entrusted to that department, and which in his opinion they will discharge far less efficiently, and with far less skill, than the business has been managed by the officials of that office. If these gentlemen of routine have their way, there never would be any change, but all things in relation to the government of the Empire and the powers and duties of colonies would remain as they are now. Sometimes where urgent solicitation is made on the part of any colony with reference to foreign matters, the Colonial Office communicates with the Foreign Office upon the subject, and a despatch is written to the British ambassador of the country with which the colony has indirectly some business. That despatch is read to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in that country, and a copy of it is left with him. It may be made, to some extent, the subject of a discussion; but the British ambassador in all these matters is usually so ill-informed that minute discussion is well nigh out of the question. He abstains from making any suggestion lest he might commit some blunder of which the colony will complain, and the matter never assumes a practical or definite form, there is nothing approaching a settlement or a basis of settlement arrived at, and in time the whole subject drops out of sight. Now, Sir, I would ask from hon. gentlemen in this House, why we should constantly implore the Colonial Office with reference to matters that specially concern ourselves and of which we ought to have charge? If they are ever to be satisfactorily attended to, if the matters are to receive a proper solution, one that is required by the merits and circumstances of the case, we ought to take charge ourselves. I think, Sir, we ought not to be suppliants in these cases where we ought to be masters, and where we ought to be masters because we are the parties chiefly concerned. This principle in no way differs from the principle of domestic self-government which has been recognized wherever responsible government is established in the colonies from the time of its first introduction. A British ambassador in a country abroad has so much to do for which he will be held to the fullest measure of responsibility, that he does not willingly add to his labours and to his public cares. Care and laborious study are necessary to master the problems which await solution even in this country, with re-

spect to our external trade and with respect to the relations of this country with our immediate neighbour. An officer, who is responsible to another Administration, and who is under the supervision of another Parliament whose interests are regarded as paramount and whose authority is claimed to be such, is never likely to give to the interests of a dependency, to its external relations, that attention and that care which are absolutely necessary. I am of the opinion that those who have most carefully considered this matter will be least likely to dissent from this view. The ancient doctrine, that a colony ought to be known only through the parent state and ought only to speak through the organs of that state, is, no doubt, strong, so far as the external relations of the colonies are concerned, but it is the remnant only of a political system which for the most part has perished. We live here for ourselves and not for the parent state. It is the well-being of this country of which the Parliament of Canada has charge; we are not charged with looking after the interests of the United Kingdom; we are not called upon to exercise a parental supervision, or to specially concern ourselves about the affairs of other portions of the Empire. It is the well-being of the people of Canada which specially interests us, and when the people of Canada have interests which extend beyond our territorial limits, when our people have so grown and so far approached the conditions of a sovereign state as to come in contact, commercially or otherwise, with sovereign states, then it is just as necessary for our well-being that those matters, according to the well-settled principles of self-government, should be under the control of this Parliament, as that our domestic concerns should be under its control. The Imperial Parliament has no more constitutional right in the nature of things, according to any principle of political ethics, to claim in defence of or for the maintenance of its own sovereignty the control over these matters of domestic concern than it has a right to claim interference with our internal concerns. Sir, it is necessary that we should have control over the negotiation of treaties relating to matters of commerce. It has been hinted that such a policy would lead to separation from the mother country. I do not think so. On the contrary, I believe it would have the very opposite effect; at all events, it would be at

least a measure of delay. It is no doubt another step in the process of political evolution. It is no doubt a step which carries us forward still nearer to the condition of nationality. It is as necessary to our well-being to-day and the maintenance of self-government in our country as the concession of responsible government with regard to our internal affairs was in the days of our fathers. We have reached a point of material growth, of political progress, beyond which we cannot satisfactorily get on without a larger measure of political autonomy than has up to this moment been conceded. You cannot put an end to the demand for this power by undertaking to point out what will be the political consequence of its possession. You cannot argue with a view to weakening or destroying it in the minds of the people of this country by saying it would lead to such relations. You may, by that line of argument, succeed in weakening the ties which bind us to the mother country; you may by that line of argument convince a certain portion of the population that you are right in your contention; but the vital force which has given rise to this demand, the surrounding circumstances, the industrial growth of the country which presses this demand upon us will not be weakened by that contention or by any conclusion at which you may arrive. All I ask by the motion which I am about to place in your hands, Mr. Speaker, is that we shall give full play to those vital forces in our constitution which on account of our material growth and the increasing complexity of society, will impose on us the necessity of a larger power of self-government than we have, up to this moment, seen proper to demand. I have heard it said that if we were to make this demand the Imperial Government would never consent to be held responsible for treaty obligations to which it had not been a party. This is a very specious contention, and it is one that requires some consideration at our hands. We have, at the head of our executive authority in Canada, as in every other dependency of the Empire, the Sovereign, who is also the Sovereign head of the Government in the United Kingdom. If treaties are negotiated upon the responsibility of Ministers of the Crown here, and who for these negotiations are held responsible to this Parliament, those negotiations will be conducted by the same Sovereign. There will not be in the form of such

a treaty or in its essence any difference from a treaty negotiated, exchanged, and ratified upon the advice of the Ministers of the Crown in the United Kingdom. If we look for a moment at the political relations which arise concerning foreign affairs we shall see that this demand is not an unreasonable one on the part of our colonies. Supposing a war were to occur between the United Kingdom and a great eastern state, between the United Kingdom and Russia. That war might be one which we thought might have been avoided. It might be that, in our opinion, it ought to have been avoided. It might be that a full investigation of the subject would convince us that peace might have been maintained with honour. But does the absence of any political authority on our part, of any voice in the conduct of our public affairs, in any way lessen or diminish our danger in consequence of that war? Why, the British Government might protect our commerce by her fleet on the high seas, but it would only be a general protection, such as would be afforded to the merchant marine of any portion of the Empire upon the high seas. The defence of our ports and harbours would depend upon ourselves. We would be required to erect fortifications, to equip them and to man them. If there were invasion we would be required to take all necessary steps to repel it. We might be put to very great expense, if a war, growing out of the consideration of matters over which we have no control and in which we have no special interest, took place. I am not complaining of this. I am not saying that this is any reason why our obligations should be lessened so far as that particular matter would be concerned; but hon. gentlemen, if they are asked to-day by the Imperial Government to erect fortifications at Nanaimo or at Victoria, or at any other point on the Pacific, are not asked to do so because of any difficulties that might arise with the neighbouring Republic. If those demands are made it is in consequence of the conflict which is constantly looming up on the horizon between the parent state and the great Empire of Russia. And so in matters in which we have no immediate concern, we have devolving upon us very serious responsibilities. I say I do not complain of that, because of the rule laid down by Lord Salisbury, in the paragraph in which I quoted, the chief responsibility rests with the parent state. That

being so, the principal authority with regard to such matters must continue there; but, Sir, that does not apply to every foreign relation that may arise. There may be cases in which the colony is the party chiefly concerned; there may be cases in which the interest under discussion is a colonial interest and not an imperial interest; and surely where that is the case, it is not unreasonable to say, that with regard to such matters the negotiations are to be conducted upon the advice of the Ministers of that colony, who are responsible to the colony which is chiefly concerned. We say that we trust to imperial authorities in all imperial matters. We do not question their authority, we do not say that where the chief responsibility and burden devolves upon them, that we ought to overrule their views or to interfere with their authority. But surely if we trust them they should trust us. This should be a matter of mutual trust, and the Imperial Government ought to be as prepared to stand by and to uphold a treaty relating to our civil and commercial matters and negotiated by us, and relating to matters in which we are chiefly concerned, as we are, as every other portion of the Empire is, to uphold the exercise of its unquestioned authority in these matters which chiefly concern itself. Now, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the time has come when the power to act must, in the case of all the large colonies, accompany the interest. That, I think, is a safe rule. I think that mistakes are much less likely to be made and difficulties are much less likely to grow up, and ill-feeling is much less likely to be engendered, where the sovereign responsibility rests with those who are chiefly affected. The sovereign power to treat and to bind may be exercised by the appointees of the Crown upon the advice of Ministers responsible to the community which is chiefly interested. The external relations of the Empire might remain unchanged if this principle be fully recognized. I repeat that I accept the rule which I have quoted from Lord Salisbury, namely, that the party who is chiefly affected is the party who has the right to exercise the sovereign power. Now, let me, by way of illustration, suppose that war, out of some matter of dispute, should arise between the United Kingdom and the United States. Who would be the party who is chiefly concerned? Would it be the United Kingdom that would be likely to be invaded or would it be Canada?

Can there be a doubt that Canada would be the party who would chiefly suffer from any conflict that might arise; and Canada being the party having the largest measure of responsibility, the largest interests involved, she is the party that ought to determine what these relations should be, and what negotiations should be had to secure a fair and just settlement. Sir, this, it seems to me, would in no way interfere with the relations which have existed between the colonies and the mother land. The constitutional development of the colonies no doubt must bring about a change in one respect in the relations of the dependencies to the parent state. That relation is no longer the relation of lord and vassal. It is the relation of friends standing upon a footing of equality, not equal in strength but equal in rights, and the dominant influence of the mother country ought to depend upon its superior wealth, and its superior numbers, and not upon any assertion of sovereignty over us with regard to matters specially concerning ourselves. The union of the Empire in the future must be a union based not upon the assertion of legislative, executive, or military supremacy. The permanence of the union and the strength of the union depends on the absence of coercion and of restraint. The strength of that union depends largely upon the language, upon a common literature, upon a common system of jurisprudence, upon a common system of constitutional government, and upon the common hopes and aspirations of the people of the various communities with regard to their progress. These, Sir, are, in my judgment, far stronger and far more enduring elements of union than the mere possession of superior legislative or military authority. It is an essential condition of progress that we must grow into a broader freedom, and become possessed of a greater measure of power, and have greater authority devolving upon us and greater responsibilities. In the nature of things this must be so, unless we, by our follies or by our vices, put an end to our progress. It is only by ceasing to be a progressive people that we can cease to grow in the direction of a larger measure of authority than we have up to this time possessed. Let us look, Sir, for a moment at some of the recent phases in the relations which the different parts of the Empire have towards each other. Has any one forgotten



the assertion of Australia a few years ago that she ought to possess the power of acquiring new territory? Australia insisted upon the acquisition of New Guinea for the purpose of protecting and promoting her future interests. The demand was a novel demand; it was a new experience to the Colonial Minister, and Lord Derby, who was Colonial Secretary at the time, replied: That Her Majesty's imperial advisers must be the sole judges as to whether Her Majesty's imperial dominions should be extended or whether they should not. But Australia contested that principle. She said: That rule is all very well in the great majority of instances; but she maintained that cases might arise when the interests of the colony are paramount, and where that is the case it was the colony that should guide the parent state and not the parent state that should determine what were the interests of the colony. The colonists pointed out that they had upon their northern border an immense island containing nearly 300,000 square miles, and they could not be indifferent to the occupation of that island in the future. They said: The islands in the southern seas are within the sphere of our dominion; we are opposed to their acquisition by any European state; we cannot afford to have established upon our border by a great military power a colony which would entail upon us serious burdens to prevent our liberties being menaced, which would not rest upon us at all if these acquisitions were not had. They impressed on the Imperial Government their views, and Lord Derby ultimately gave way; but he did not do so until the Empire of Germany had acquired 60,000 square miles, more than one-fifth of the area of the Island of New Guinea. But this discussion which took place between the Imperial Government and the governments of the Australian colonies shows the direction in which the greater colonies are growing. It shows that they cannot be indifferent to their external relations, that they are anxious to watch their opportunities, and that they have hopes that at no distant day those colonies will become united and grow into a great commonwealth; they are the aspirations born of freedom in the midst of great opportunities, and no one that follows that correspondence can fail to sympathize with the Australian colonies, and to believe that they were altogether in the right. Well,

Sir, France acquired the Islands of New Ireland and the New Hebrides, and undertook to establish penal settlements there. The colonies protested. They presented their views to the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office became the mere instrument for the purpose of giving effect to the views of the colonies in regard to these matters. Then, look for a moment at the discussion which took place between England and Germany with regard to the respective spheres of influence of those nations in southern Africa. Cape Colony became interested in the discussion, and its Government and the press insisted on their right to be heard with regard to that matter, on the ground that it was one affecting the future interests of that colony, even more than it affected the interests of the parent state. All those discussions, like the action of the Government here—although they formerly opposed this principle—have again and again made it clear that the larger colonies have outgrown the principle of local self-government confined to mere domestic affairs. They have reached the very border line of such authority. Their interests are extending beyond that; and now the time has come when they must assert their claim to a larger measure of governmental authority in order that they may adjust the functions of the Government to the new circumstances which have arisen. Sir, it is in this way that the Empire is growing; it is in this direction that the authority of colonial government is being extended. Now, I know that there are some hon. gentlemen in this House who subscribe to the doctrine of imperial federation, and who are looking forward to that as a solution of some of those difficulties which are pressing themselves upon the attention of the governments of all the larger colonies. I may say, after having given that subject the best consideration that I have been able to give it, that I do not think it is in that direction that the solution of the relations of the different portions of the Empire to each other will be found. On the subject of an imperial federation applied to communities so widely separated from each other as those which constitute the British Empire, there is such an absence of general knowledge with regard to matters of a sovereign and large character, but an acquaintance with which is in the nature of things inevitable, that there will always be wanting some of the essential elements to anything like a systematic and well-organized

federal empire. Sir, the relations between the different portions of the Empire are being worked out by its exigencies. The necessities of each part are working and will continue to work out, when not seriously hampered, a solution upon altogether different lines. There is not a systematization of a centralized system for the whole Empire. There is a tendency to a division of the sovereign authority between the different parts of the Empire, all being bound by the principle of mutual trust and mutual obligation to assume that that sovereign authority exercised by the portions specially affected will be wisely and properly exercised. Why, Sir, let us suppose for one instant that we had an Imperial federation and that the question of the extension of the rights and the authority of the Empire in the vicinity of Australia were raised; how would the whole Empire, united in a representative body, or any executive body, be better qualified to decide what would be best to be done in that matter than the people of Australia themselves? Why should not the whole Empire take the solution which the people of Australia would ultimately, after due reflection, determine upon, without insisting upon an unwieldy and cumbrous organization, the majority of the members of which must always be ignorant of what is proposed to be done by each particular section. There is no doubt, Sir, that the Empire is undergoing. It may be slowly, nevertheless it is undergoing transformation. So far as the great colonies are concerned, it is assuming the form of a voluntary federation, the members of which are simply held together by that voluntary union. As the colonies increase in wealth and population, they will have in a large and still larger degree distinct external relations springing up; and in my opinion everything points to this solution, that these external relations must be left to be dealt with by the parties chiefly concerned. It is in this way, and not by a federal union, that the different portions of the Empire are likely to maintain their continued relations to each other. The legal relations may long remain as they are; but the conventional government must undergo change. It is, as we know, yearly undergoing some modification; and the changes which take place must be adapted to the actual circumstances of the Empire. These new phases are evolved by, and they are the natural and necessary outcome of the vital forces which act on the imperial system. The

facts of which I have spoken are evidences of this vitality, and so long as there is no undue interference, no attempt to force upon the different portions of the Empire some preconceived notions, these vital forces are likely to prove sufficiently strong to adjust the constitutional government of every section to the necessary wants of the population. Now, speaking for myself, I say that I confidently trust to the strength of that vitality for the wisest and best solution, and I ask the House by this motion to give free play to this principle as applied to our own requirements. I readily admit that the public officials of the parent state, who are long habituated to the administration of certain departments of the Government, may not willingly surrender any portion of the power with which they have been long entrusted; and so you may look for opposition to this proposition. But it must not be forgotten that concession is not always made to conviction; it is as often made to get rid of importunity and its necessary worry, as justice was done by the unjust judge mentioned in the Gospel. The vital growth of our national Government cannot be impeded by institutions which have survived the circumstance upon which their utility depended; it is necessary that a new arrangement in this particular should be established, and, once it is established and adjusts itself to its environments, the governing of the Empire will, no doubt, be more satisfactory than it is at present. There will be fewer frictions, and everybody will be ready to admit that the condition of things introduced is superior to that which it has supplanted. I ask the attention of the House, for a moment, to the importance of commerce in the eyes of English statesmen. See the number of costly appliances which the British Government maintain all over the world for the protection and extension of their trade and commerce. There are coaling stations, forts, docks, ships of war, and all these things, mainly for the protection of that commerce. Consider the consular system, now a branch of the Foreign Office, collecting information that may be necessary for the maintenance and further extension of commerce. You have consuls and vice-consuls upon whom duties are imposed and labours of a very important character which they are required to perform. The information which they are required to collect and report is of the first consequence to the manufacturers and merchants. They make

known the character of the trade of every port and every consular district. They inform the British public of the kind of goods that enter into competition with British manufactures and British products in each particular locality. They inform them of the directions in which trade may be extended. Their reports are filled with suggestions as to the way in which the products of a particular industry may be enabled to maintain their place in the markets of the world. This is the road upon which we must enter as far as our interests require and our circumstances will warrant. It is by making our people acquainted with the world's wants, and by undertaking to supply them as far as they advantageously can, and not by higher taxes, which will enable them to plunder and devour each other, that this country can be made to grow and prosper. The first step to be taken to this end is to have the right to negotiate commercial treaties on our own behalf conceded to us by Her Majesty's Ministers in Westminster. And so, with the view of obtaining the opinion of the House and this country upon this question, I beg to move:

That all the words after the word "That" be left out, and the following inserted instead

thereof: "it is expedient to obtain the necessary powers to enable Her Majesty the Queen through Her representative the Governor General of Canada, upon the advice of his Ministers, to appoint an agent to negotiate commercial treaties with other British possessions or with foreign states, subject to the prior consent or subsequent approval of the Parliament of Canada."

I use the word "agents" because I wish to use as broad and comprehensive a term as possible. It will cover every species of government representative abroad, whether he be a commercial or political agent, whether he be a person holding the rank of a permanent official or ambassador, or whether he be a plenipotentiary extraordinary, specially appointed for a specific purpose and the accomplishment of a particular end, and so with these explanations as to the character of my motion, I beg leave to put it in your hands, Sir, seconded by the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier).

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