

SPEECH
OF
HON. AMOS TUCK, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE,
ON THE
NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES,
RECIPROCAL
TRADE WITH THE BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN PROVINCES,
AND THE
FREE NAVIGATION OF THE ST. LAWRENCE,
DELIVERED
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
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S P E E C H .

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I propose to discuss the topics of the fisheries, and of reciprocal free trade with the British Provinces in North America. Were it my purpose to engage in the controversies which parties are now waging against each other, I should have many misgivings as to the propriety of occupying any portion of the brief period of the session now remaining. The time for action on the matters of interest before Congress is short, and none but important subjects should intervene, even for the space of an hour. But I feel that the magnitude of the topics of my remarks, considered in connection with the fact that not a single hour has been devoted to the latter branch of my subject, during this session, is sufficient an apology for occupying the time necessary to present the matter to the consideration of this House and the public.

The United States have, in my belief, the opportunity, by early and judicious action, by legislation, or by treaty, of securing such an extension of our fisheries, and such a monopoly of trade and intercourse with the British Provinces at the north of us, as will secure, without any of the evils of annexation, all the benefits which we could realize from the closest union. These benefits may, and are likely to be lost, by neglect and delay in availing ourselves of the benefits that circumstances have induced the Provinces and Great Britain to offer to us. The way is open, not only to escape from any perplexities that may have arisen in respect to the fisheries, but to enlarge our privileges in that regard, to an extent of great and lasting importance. Besides this, we can obtain the free navigation of the St. Lawrence, the natural outlet of a vast extent of our country, and probably the free use of the St. John's and other important streams of the Provinces. This opportunity of acquiring all the benefits, without any of the evils of annexation, and in a manner which, if examined, can furnish no ground of jealousy or complaint in any part of the country, is an occurrence second in magnitude to but few measures that ever have been considered by Congress. A coincidence of events have

led to propositions for commerce, and consequent emolument therefrom, which a few years ago we could not have obtained at any price. Let me briefly allude to the events which have brought about this result.

Within a few years a great change has taken place in the colonial policy of Great Britain. Formerly the colonies were compelled, by heavy differential duties, to purchase their supplies exclusively of the mother country. The manufactures of Great Britain were admitted into the Provinces with a lower tariff than was imposed upon the same articles from other countries; while the exports of the Provinces were admitted into the ports of Great Britain with corresponding advantages over all competitors. The consequence was, that with all our advantages of proximity, we had almost no business or other intercourse with our neighbors in the Provinces. But Great Britain found it expedient to change her commercial policy at home; to admit breadstuffs and lumber, the most important products of the colonies, into all of her markets free of duty, in order to secure customers from the Baltic and the Black sea, whom she most needed. The Provinces, no longer having advantages over others in the matter of their chief exports to the British markets, would have been too intolerably burdened if they had been compelled to maintain differential duties at home in favor of the mother country. In 1846, the Canadian Legislature having been authorized by the Imperial Parliament to regulate their own tariff, and being anxious to cultivate a free intercourse with the United States, abolished differential duties and admitted American manufactures and foreign goods purchased in the American markets, on the same terms as those from Great Britain. The duty on British goods was raised, and that on American was diminished, so that they were made equal. There is no doubt that interest dictated this important enactment. Yet it was a measure, if beneficial to the people of Canada, equally beneficial to those of the United States; and being a spontaneous offering on their part, of what was certain to secure to us an extensive and lucrative trade, they had a right to expect that this generosity should, at least, attract our attention. Yet it failed to do so. When, in 1849, Gen. Dix, of New York, stated in the Senate the fact of the abolition of differential duties, he was called upon to give his authority. Private interest, however,

had already availed itself of the benefits of the measure, and an extensive trade, notwithstanding our heavy tariff on Canadian products, had grown up with the States. The amount of duties on goods from the United States, increased many fold in three or four years, and the duties on goods from Great Britain experienced a corresponding decrease. The port of Toronto will serve as index of the increase of trade secured to us, where the amount of duties paid on imports rose within the short period mentioned, from \$30,000 to about \$400,000 per annum.

But if the people of Canada buy our productions, they must pay for them with what they have to sell. They cannot get money by selling their products abroad, and bring it here to buy what we have to sell. That would impoverish them and be an unnatural course of business which could not continue. Yet when the Canadian proposes to pay for his purchases of us, by bringing what he has to sell, he is met by a heavy duty, which repels him from us as inevitably as differential duties formerly debarred us from Canada. Under this state of things, the Canadian Government made application to Congress, five years ago, for exemption from this bar to trade, by establishing reciprocal free trade in national products with the United States, having first passed a law on its part, abolishing similar duties against us, to take effect when the United States should have passed a corresponding statute admitting certain articles specified, without duty. This proposition was submitted to Congress in the last part of the Administration of Mr. Polk, and received his favorable consideration, also, that of Mr. Buchanan, Secretary of State, and Mr. Walker, Secretary of the Treasury. The following bill was reported from the Committee of Commerce, by Hon. Joseph Grinnell, the chairman, and subsequently received the sanction of the House, and passed without opposition :

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That when the President of the United States shall issue his proclamation that the articles hereinafter enumerated, being of the growth or production of the United States, are admitted into the province of Canada by law free of duty, that on and after that day, the like articles, being the growth or production of said province of Canada, shall be admitted into the United States free of duty, when imported direct from said province, so long as the said enumerated articles are admitted into said province of Canada from the United States free of duty, unless otherwise directed by Congress, to wit: Grain and breadstuffs of all

kinds, vegetables, fruits, animals, hides, wool, tallow, horns, salted and fresh meats, ores of all kinds of metals, timbers, staves, wood and lumber of all kinds.

This bill went to the Senate, where Gen. Dix made an able speech in its favor; but it failed to become a law for want of time. Since 1848, our domestic difficulties have absorbed attention, so that no action has been had by this House, though the Committee of Commerce of the last House, through their chairman, Hon. R. M. McLane, on the 16th of May, 1850, introduced a bill in the identical language of that which had passed the House in 1848.

In the meantime the progress of events in the Provinces has presented the subject of reciprocity to us in a new form, and as a much more important matter. The proposition made to us in 1848, and which passed this House, related only to the Province of Canada. But differential duties having been abolished in all the provinces, and everything tending to show, not only the mutual advantage, but the necessity on the part of the Provinces, of enlarged intercourse with the United States, we have now the general proposition of establishing an extensive commerce with all the British possessions at the North, and of opening to the enterprise of our fishermen, invaluable privileges, and putting an end to the annoyances and disputes heretofore existing in regard to our rights.

The people of the Provinces are exceedingly impatient of what they believe to be our injurious restrictions upon their productions, by which, failing, as they say, to respond to their liberal legislation in our behalf, we are driving their trade into foreign channels, as much to the detriment of ourselves as to them. No man who has given the subject his attention can fail to see the mutual advantages which must result from adopting some liberal arrangements to secure the trade of the Provinces. It is known that Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster have favored some arrangements not materially unlike that proposed, while the people of the Provinces are annoyed at the neglect which their liberal propositions for their own and our benefit, have experienced in Congress.

The British Government at home, taking the same view of the question, with a large portion of the colonists, and probably judging that reciprocal trade with us will put off, to an indefinite future, all difficulties that may ever arise about annexation, have, through the British Minister, taken active

steps to promote the wishes of the friends of reciprocity. Things are now approaching a crisis, inasmuch as the people of the Provinces having become convinced that they can obtain no satisfactory response from the Government of the United States, are seriously meditating a return to differential duties in favor of England.

With these remarks I will cause to be read the following letter from the British Minister to our Secretary of State which, although, only one of several communications on the subject, will convey authentic information as to the nature of the propositions made, and the hazards represented to be attendant upon delay.

“BRITISH LEGATION, June 24, 1851.

SIR: I have already expressed to you at different periods, and especially in a note of 22d March last, the disappointment which was experienced in Canada when at the close of last session of Congress it was known that no progress whatever had been made in the bill which had been brought forward for three years successively for reciprocating to the measure which passed the Canadian Legislature in 1847, and which granted to the natural produce of this country an entry free duty, into Canada whensoever the Federal Legislature of the United States should pass a measure similarly admitting into the United States the natural produce of the Canadas. This disappointment was the greater, inasmuch as the Canadian Government has always adopted the most liberal commercial policy with respect to the United States, as well in regard to the transit through its canals, as in regard to the admission of manufactured goods coming from this country.

I have now the honor to enclose to you the copy of an official communication from which you will perceive, that unless I can hold out some hopes that a policy will be adopted in the United States similar to that which has been adopted in Canada and which the Canadian authorities would be willing, if met in a corresponding spirit, to carry out still farther, the *Canadian Government* and legislatures are likely forthwith to take certain measures, which, both in themselves and their consequences, will effect a considerable change in the commercial intercourse between the Canadas and the United States.

I should see with great regret the adoption of such measures, and I am induced to hope, from the conversations I have recently had with you, that they will be unnecessary.

The wish of her Majesty's government indeed would be rather to improve than impair all relations of friendship and good neighborhood between her Majesty's American possessions and the United States; and I feel myself authorized to repeat to you now, what I have at different times already stated to Mr. Clayton and yourself, viz: that her Majesty's Government could see with pleasure any arrangement either by treaty or by legislation, establishing a free interchange of all natural productions not only between Canada and the United States, but between the United States and all her Majesty's North American provinces; and furthermore, I am willing to say that in the event of such an arrangement, her Majesty's Government would be ready to open to American shipping, the waters of the river St. Lawrence, with the canals adjoining, according to the terms of a letter which I address

ed to Mr. Clayton, on 27th March, 1850, for the information of the Committee on Commerce in the House of Representatives, and to which I take the liberty of referring you, whilst I may add that her Majesty's Government would in this case be likewise willing to open to American fishermen, the fisheries along the coast of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, according to the conditions specified in the enclosed extract from instructions with which I am furnished.

The willingness to grant to American citizens on such reasonable conditions two important privileges so long enjoyed exclusively by the subjects of Great Britain, will testify clearly to the spirit by which the British Government is on this occasion animated; and as affairs have now arrived at that crisis in which a frank explanation of the views of either party is necessary for the interests and right understanding of both, I take the liberty of begging you to inform me whether you are disposed, on the part of the United States, to enter into such a convention as will place the commercial relations between the United States and her Majesty's North American colonies on the footing which I have here proposed; or whether, in the event of there appearing to you any objection to proceed by convention in this matter, you can assure me that the United States Government will take the earliest opportunity of urgently recommending Congress to carry out the object aforesaid by the means of legislation.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you the assurance of my highest consideration.

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER, &c., &c., &c.

H. L. BULWER.

It is not necessary to read Lord Elgin's despatch, referred to in this letter, nor the "extract" in regard to the fisheries. I have not the letter of Mr. Webster in reply, but it is understood that he is favorably disposed to a commercial arrangement, by the treaty making power, or by Congress, for accomplishing the general objects set forth in the above letter. I will read the following schedule, specifying the articles which are proposed by the British Minister to be reciprocally admitted duty free:

"Grain, and breadstuffs of all kinds, vegetables, fruits, birds, animals, hides, wool, cheese, tallow, horns, salted and fresh meats, ores of all kinds of metals, plaster of paris, in stone or ground, ashes, timber, staves, wood, and lumber of all kinds, and all fish, either cured or fresh."

The Bill which passed this house in 1848, as before stated, as well as that reported by Mr. McLane in the last Congress, gave the schedule of free articles in the following words:

"Grain and breadstuffs of all kinds, vegetables, fruits, animals, hides, wool, tallow, horns, salted and fresh meats, ores of all kinds of metals, timber, staves, wood and lumber of all kinds."

I do not presume to suggest, in what language, or manner, nor with what qualifications and conditions, the propositions

of the Provinces should be met and accepted. But I believe the opportunity is now singularly favorable, to achieve a great deal for the fisheries, for the commerce of New England, and the States upon the lakes, and for the general industry and prosperity of the whole country. Whether this object is within the range of the treaty-making power, or is the appropriate business of the national Legislature, I will not now discuss. I believe, however, that if the present Secretary of State should apply to the subject the powers of his wonderful mind, and grasping, as none but he can do, the whole subject of our Northern relations, the fisheries, the free navigation of the St. Lawrence, and reciprocal trade; should enter into a treaty, settling and defining the whole matter, in a liberal and just manner, the country would experience relief, and willingly acquiesce in what he should do; and that the whole subject would be settled more justly and prudently, than it could be by any other means. With the liberal spirit manifested by the Provinces and Great Britain, I cannot doubt that the details, as well as the general principle, of an arrangement can be satisfactorily agreed upon; should the negotiators sit down in earnest to the business. The three great objects to be aimed at are, the extension of our fisheries, increase of trade with the Provinces, and the free navigation of their rivers.

It is evident that on certain terms, and if those proposed are not right, then without doubt on others, that would be satisfactory, the British Government are ready to grant a privilege to the shore fisheries, with the right of landing and occupying such stations on shore as may be necessary for curing and packing fish, and pursuing the business gradually, in a manner most likely to be successful. If this should be acquired for our fishermen, I have reason to believe that some of those most deeply interested would regard the loss of the small protection they now enjoy not as an unreasonable consideration. But I propose not the details. My object is to call attention to the general subject, and lay before Congress some reasons for believing the opportunity now enjoyed, for advantageous negotiation or legislation, extremely favorable for good results, and deserving the earliest and most careful attention of our Government.

First let me speak of the fisheries. I know the importance of this interest, living in one of the oldest fishing districts of the country, and having many constituents constantly engaged in the business. I would be exceedingly rejoiced to see their privileges enlarged, and their laborious industry more adequately rewarded; and I believe that a more favorable moment now exists for the accomplishment of this object, than has ever before occurred. Our fishermen need less restriction and more privileges, and now is the time to secure these to them.

The recent excitement in regard to supposed trespasses by the British upon our fishing rights, has happened at an unfortunate period; and if it have any unfavorable effect upon any pending negotiations, or upon any action of Congress necessary in the premises, it will operate more disastrously to ourselves than to any opposing interests. I think the public mind should be disabused of all erroneous impressions in regard to the purpose of other nations to encroach upon us; and that, for our own welfare, we should conduct the negotiations under consideration with the utmost calmness and consideration. It is under this conviction, and without any intention of justifying any wrongful act of the British or Colonial forces, that I call attention to a few important facts, which I have obtained from perfectly reliable sources.

The British Government have sent out no stronger forces to protect their fishing privileges, the present year, than heretofore. They have promulgated no new construction of the convention of 1818; they have given no orders for the seizing of vessels, unless they were trespassing within the "three miles," where we admit that our vessels have no right to take fish; and, finally, no more seizures have been made the present year than have been made each year since 1835. It is not improbable that the orders given may have been carried out by some over-zealous colonial officers, irritated, perhaps, by a sense of wrong on our part, in an unjustifiable manner. But that the British Government have intended to encroach upon American rights, or to vindicate their own by extraordinary means, or, least of all, to frighten us into the acceptance of terms, which we would not receive unless overawed by an application of force, is a supposition without foundation, and to be forthwith discarded. I think it an act of justice to avow the facts on this

subject, because it is right that the truth should be known, and because miapprehension will have a tendency to prevent that mutually beneficial arrangement in respect to the fisheries and commerce with the Provinces, which is now happily within reasonable hope of accomplishment.

The treaty of 1818, so far as relates to taking fish, reads as follows :

“Whereas differences have arisen respecting the *liberty* claimed by the United States for the inhabitants thereof to take, dry, and cure fish on certain coasts, bays, harbors, and creeks of His Britannic Majesty's dominions in America, it is agreed between the high contracting parties that the inhabitants of the said United States shall have, forever, in common with the subjects of His Britannic Majesty, the liberty to take fish of every kind on that part of the southern coast of Newfoundland which extends from Cape Ray to the Rameau Islands, on the western and northern coast of said Newfoundland, from the said Cape Ray to the Quirpon Islands, on the shores of the Magdalen Islands; and also on the coasts, bays, harbors, and creeks from Mount Joly, on the southern coast of Labrador, to and through the Straits of Belle Isle, and thence northwardly indefinitely along the coast, without prejudice, however, to any of the exclusive rights of the Hudson's Bay Company. *And the United States hereby renounce forever any liberty heretofore enjoyed or claimed by the inhabitants thereof to take, dry, or cure fish on or within three marine miles of any of the coasts, bays, creeks, or harbors of His Britannic Majesty's dominions in America, not included within the above mentioned limits; Provided, however,* That the American fishermen shall be admitted to enter such bays or harbors for the purpose of shelter, and of repairing damages therein, of purchasing wood, and of obtaining water, and for no other purpose whatever. But they shall be under such restrictions as may be necessary to prevent their taking, drying, or curing fish therein, or in any other manner whatever abusing the privileges hereby reserved to them.”

That portion of the above claim which I shall print in italics, contains the source of the whole difficulty. Our Commissioners in 1818, specially renounced the shore fishery, three miles in width, over a vast extent of coast. This renunciation began at the boundary of the State of Maine, continued in and around the Bay of Fundy, (but in this bay we now have larger privileges,) along the coast of New Brunswick, all around Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Prince Edward's Island, the remaining coast of New Brunswick, and so along to Mt. Joly, in Labrador. This coast where we lay no claim to take fish within three miles of the shore, is at least 2,500 miles in extent. This shore fishery which we have renounced, is of great value, and extremely important to American fishermen. It is important to us in this respect. The cod fishery which is pursued for a portion of every year, by a large fleet

from New England, is carried on at considerable distances, sometimes hundreds of miles from the shore. Large quantities are taken; but as a general thing, to make the business of fishing profitable, it is necessary that our fishermen finish out the season, by employment for a time after the cod fishery has ended, in the fall, in the mackerel fishery, or in some uncertain jobs in the coasting trade. Without something of this kind, the expenses of well built vessels and costly outfits, is so poorly remunerated, as to make fishing a losing business. From the first of September to the close of the season, the mackerel run near the shore, and it is next to impossible for our vessels to obtain fares, without taking fish within the prohibited limits. We differ with England in regard to the measurement of these "limits;" they claiming to run from "headland to headland," and we to follow the indentations of the coast. But the real difficulty is not here. The British have never taken a vessel as a trespasser, when not within the limits which we acknowledge we have renounced. They have given particular directions to the officers of their vessels not to do so, and the reason is plain. They know that if they exact a strict observance of our renunciation, on our own construction, they break up our mackerel fishery. Hence it would be folly in either to raise an issue on the "headland" doctrine on which most people, I think, would hold our construction to be the true one. I do not think it generally known that the whole difficulty about the fisheries is about our right to take mackerel. The cod fishing privileges are adequate already; and no vessel in that business has ever been seized or interfered with. I think it is proper to go still further and to state frankly, what, after a patient investigation of every source of authentic information within my reach, I believe to be the real difficulty.

The truth is, our fishermen need absolutely, and must have, the thousands of miles of shore fishery which have been renounced, or they must always do an uncertain business. If our mackerel men are prohibited from going within three miles of the shore, and are forcibly kept away, (and nothing but force will do it,) then they may as well give up their business first as last. It was always uncertain, and generally unsuccessful, however well pursued.

Perhaps I shall be thought to charge the commissioners of

1818, with overlooking our interests. They did so, in the important renunciation which I have quoted; but they are obnoxious to no complaints for so doing. In 1818, we took no mackerel on the coasts of the British possessions, and there was no reason to anticipate that we should ever have occasion to do so. Mackerel were then found as abundantly on the coast of New England, as any where in the world, and it was not till years after that this beautiful fish, in a great degree, left our waters. The mackerel fishery on the Provincial coasts has principally grown up since 1838, and no vessel was ever licensed for that business in the United States till 1828. The commissioners in 1818 had no other business but to protect the cod fishery, and this they did in a manner generally satisfactory to those most interested.

I have thus stated the real difficulty in regard to the fisheries, because it needs to be understood, in order to draw forth an expression of public opinion in favor of availing ourselves of the opportunity presented of extending our privileges, and obtaining what we want. No method is now offered, nor in my belief will ever occur, whereby we can satisfy the claims of our fishermen, except by entering into commercial arrangements with the Provinces, on some national basis of reciprocal free trade, as we are now solicited to do. They cannot well do without reciprocity, (equally beneficial, though not equally indispensable to us,) and we cannot well do without better fishing privileges. Both may be, and ought to be, immediately adjusted. The amount of the fishing interests which demands the attention of Government, is as follows:

The average tonnage in the mackerel fishery, for five years, preceding 1851, was.....	51,593 tons.
Average number of men employed.....	8,879
Average annual product.....	283,266 barrels.
Average aggregate annual value.....	\$1,557,963
Average tonnage employed in the cod fishery for ten years prior to 1851 was.....	79,251 tons.
Tonnage in 1851.....	95,616
Average number of men employed.....	11,331
Average product.....	713,256 quintals.
Average annual value.....	\$1,554,473

I will not specify the claims of this interest to the fostering care of Government, as nurseries of American seamen; that subject, as well as others, having been ably attended to, in the excellent speech of my friend from Massachusetts, (Mr. SCUDDER.) The amount of money invested, and the number

of men employed, vindicate the right to attention from the Government. With all the discussion that has taken place and with the liberal proposition made at the outset by the British Minister, our fishermen will not be satisfied without progress. They believe, and truly, that their privileges can be extended. They want the shore fisheries, they want a right to erect and maintain structures on shore to cure cod fish, as soon as taken, thus saving cost and making better fish for market; and believing their wishes to be easy of accomplishment, they will not consent to the endurance of former restrictions, the annoyances and troubles of which they have so long felt.

In this connection, I must refer to the views of our late brother on this floor, whose sudden death has so recently cast a gloom over this House. Mr. Rantoul was a faithful representative of a district deeply interested in the fisheries. On account of the alleged encroachments of the British upon our rights, he undertook an examination of the subject, in connection with the proposed commercial arrangements between the Provinces and the United States, and devoted to it the last days of his health and life. In common with all, I deplore his loss to this House and the country; and I will add that I particularly regret that he did not live to deliver the speech he was preparing on the subjects I am now undertaking to discuss. I have the more confidence in the views I present, because I know, that in the main, they were sanctioned by his superior judgment.

But I come to the remaining topic of my remarks, which, if it had not been by the circumstances inseparably connected with the fisheries, I might have discussed alone, as being of equal if not greater importance. The proposition for the closest commercial relations with the North American Provinces of Great Britain, embracing the fair use of their rivers and canals, is a subject of very great magnitude. It involves all the commercial, political, and moral benefits arising from intimate relations with a great nation. The Provinces now contain a population of more than two-thirds that of the United States at the time of the Revolution. Having generally a good soil, an invigorating climate, and a population with habits which promise great good, there can be no doubt that there is a future of prosperity and greatness before them,

second to no nation on the Continent except the United States. They border upon us, on a line of many thousand miles in extent, and thus have all the advantages of situation to benefit us, and be benefitted by us, which they could have if they were integral parts of the Union. We now treat with them in their weakness; we shall hereafter know them in their greatness. They come to us in a liberal spirit, and entertaining no jealousy of the more rapid advancement of our country, provided they can follow, even at an humble distance, in the path of progress and improvement, they make explicit, and earnest appeals for an honorable and mutually beneficial reciprocity. Their appeals have been unheeded for a long time, and it is both becoming and necessary that we should make our decision at an early period. They have not made any proposition of the measure of reciprocal free trade which they request us to consider as their ultimatum; and, of course, I do not undertake to define any. But they have come with liberal propositions, as a basis, and my earnest appeal is in favor of meeting them in the same spirit.

Commerce is the great pioneer of human progress and improvement. Two civilized nations cannot have trade with one another without mutual advantage to both. They cannot refrain from trade and intercourse, especially if conterminous, without disadvantage to both. The mutual accumulation of wealth, and means of improvement and happiness, is the natural result of abundant commerce. A fair exchange of such products as each can provide for the other, with less labor than that other can provide for himself, lessens the amount of human labor necessary, and leaves more time and means for improvement and happiness. Men invent engines, steamboats, railroads, and telegraphs, for the purposes of commerce, in the hope of gain. They are used to enlighten the dark places of the earth, to spread information and religion throughout the world, to equalize prices, transport commodities, prevent panics, and annihilate the evil of local deaths and famines. We live in a wonderful age of commercial activity and improvement. We are continually seeking for new fields of enterprise, and stretching our efforts to the end of the earth to find new customers for our products and our wares. Shall we overlook the best customers we can anywhere find, (because they are our neighbors, and the cost of

transportation is thereby chiefly saved,) and go to China and Japan, with cannon and gun powder, to open by force of arms the distant nations who repeal all our advances? No man is unaware of the benefits of unrestricted commerce between the States of this Union. It has contributed more than anything else to our growth and our forces as a nation; in fact all else would have been insufficient without it. It is the great bond of our Union at the present time, and does more to hold us together than ten standing armies. It is our invisible, omnipresent, and all but omnipotent resisting force against dissolution. By its noiseless power it vindicates Republican institutions, promotes the general prosperity, and will hold us together, when physical force would only produce anarchy or tyranny. Let us extend this bond of interest with proper limitations, or none at all, as may be thought best, to the Provinces of Great Britain laying upon our borders. It may be done with general benefit to the whole country. It is no scheme which may not be safely carried out in a Southern as well as a Northern direction. Reciprocity may be assumed as the basis of our relations with all adjoining nations. If adopted, it will open the way for the abolition of tonnage duty on Spanish vessels engaged in trade between Cuba and Porto Rico and the United States, now so earnestly sought by a portion of the South. I would vote for such abolition at any time. We can adopt reciprocity for this Continent and the adjoining islands as an AMERICAN SYSTEM, deserving the name it would bear. Annexation and "filibustering" expeditions would then be little talked of, because there would be no commercial restrictions, whose removal makes conquests and closer combinations necessary for human progress.

But let me confine myself to some specific benefits to be derived from making the colonial propositions for trade in the liberal spirit in which they are made. The proposition of Sir Henry L. Bulwer particularly mentions the free navigation of the St. Lawrence. It is well known that by the Welland Canal, which connects Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, the Canadians can now transport all their shipping at pleasure from the Lakes to the river St. Lawrence, and thence into the Atlantic ocean. In connexion with their propositions of reciprocity, and settlement of the fisheries, they now offer to our western commerce this great privilege. Let us

look at its value. The river St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario at the Northern border of New York; Western New York, Northern Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, are contiguous to Lake Erie; Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois, are adjacent to Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior. The St. Lawrence is the natural outlet to all this immense country, and with the exception of Lake Superior, (and that will not be an exception many years longer,) large as well as small vessels, may lie, and often are taken from all these Lakes through the Canadian canals and the St. Lawrence to the ocean. We know how to prize the free navigation of the Mississippi, and we shall not cease to extol the foresight of the statesman who was mainly instrumental in the purchase of Louisiana, by which this was obtained. The St. Lawrence, with the Lakes, is the natural outlet of an extent of country nearly equal to that drained by the Mississippi, and the course of that river is more favorably directed towards good markets, than the Mississippi. It is not far from the line of a great circle on the earth's surface, from the lake country to England, and is, therefore, on the line of the shortest distance, although such does not appear to be the case, on the common maps of Mercator's projection. It is on the line of the greatest wheat producing region in the world. There is now calculated to be not less than \$8,000,000 worth of shipping upon our Lakes, owned by citizens of the United States. Our citizens have often felt the advantage of transporting their vessels, and have been frequently asking the Canadian Government for leave to do so. Permission has generally been refused, though granted in some instances. Within two years one of our vessels laden with copper ore, bound to Swamsea, in Wales, and another with emigrants for California, were allowed to pass out of the Lakes through the St. Lawrence to the ocean. Two war steamers of the United States were not long ago allowed the same privilege. For five months of the year all shipping on the Lakes lies idle, on account of ice. It is estimated that one fourth part of it, say two millions of dollars worth, is adapted to ocean navigation, and might be profitably employed, if it could be got out, in foreign commerce, or in the coasting trade of the Atlantic States, at times so unnecessarily expensive. The free navigation of the St. Lawrence is only necessary to show us in the fall of every year,

long lines of vessels seeking the Atlantic, through Canada, laden with western produce, and in the spring, making their way back with foreign wares, and with the avails of profitable labor for nearly half a year. Let no one imagine that freights of breadstuffs may not, in this manner, be transported by our own vessels to foreign markets. Our wheat competes in British markets with wheat from the Black Sea; yet Odessa, the chief place of export on that sea, is a thousand miles more distant, by water communication, from Liverpool, than is Cleveland in our State of Ohio. The St. Lawrence is important to the great west now, but when we attempt to calculate what the west is destined to be, in wealth, population, varied interest, and varied necessity, we can apprehend something of the importance of securing its great outlet now when we have the opportunity. If I could be permitted to make one suggestion to the representatives of the watchful of her interests, and faithfully laboring to promote them, it would be to take care that the present golden opportunity of securing the free navigation of the St. Lawrence be not lost.

I have heard it suggested, that we might accept of limited reciprocal trade with the Provinces in such a manner, as that the commercial transactions between them and us, would be injurious to our manufactures. If I believed that any practicable arrangement with our neighbors, would involve such a result, there is no one who would be more anxious to prevent it than myself. But I believe arrangements that prevent trade, are alone injurious to the parties; not those which facilitate it. If a basis is agreed upon, which shall open the way for the people of the Provinces to come and trade with us, I have no fears that it will not be profitable to both parties. To keep them away, by tariffs on their products, so that they cannot be brought here, to pay for our fabrics, will thereby injure our manufacturers, who desire to sell to them their goods.

It is now universally admitted, by sound economists and statesmen, says an able writer in the North American Review, "that no commercial arrangement can be permanently advantageous to one party without being so to both; that the basis of virtual, when not of literal reciprocity, is the only solid ground of international relations, and that the increased prosperity of one of the family of nations, only offers an enlarged

market for the industry, and an expanded field for the commerce of every other. The recognition of these principles is fast girdling the earth with a zone of common interest, mutual good will, and reciprocal helpfulness."

The author of these sentiments is not an advocate of general free trade, without regard to circumstances. On the contrary, he believes a tariff to be indispensable to develop American manufactures, in competition with the productions of Europe, where labor is cheaper, and money is cheaper than we ever hope they will be here. It is with similar sentiments that I have quoted his remarks just given.

Let us now look to the extent of country and the estimated population, with whom we are now seeking better commercial arrangements. The Provinces are five in number, with distinct, independent governments, of the following population and extent:

	Population.	Area—acres.
Canada (East and West) contains a population of.....	1,500,000	163,500,000
New Brunswick.....	200,000	19,000,000
Nova Scotia (including Cape Breton).....	280,000	11,500,000
Newfoundland.....	102,000	23,000,000
Prince Edward's Island.....	63,000	1,360,000
Total.....	<u>2,155,000</u>	<u>218,360,000</u>

The tables of commerce and navigation, published annually by Congress, show that the commerce between the United States and these colonies is by no means of the same character with all. The principal exports from Canada to the United States, are lumber, grain, flour, ashes, and wool, and amount to about seven million of dollars. The principal articles exported from New Brunswick, are lumber, coal, gypsum, and fish, fish oil and grind-stones; from Nova Scotia, sawed lumber, fish, gypsum, grind-stones, lime, coal, potatoes, and cord-wood. Prince Edward's is a small colony, chiefly engaged in the fisheries, and agricultural employments, and building annually a large number of small vessels for sale. The exports of Newfoundland consist of dry and pickled fish, fish oil, seal skins, seal oil, &c., and amounted in 1845, to \$3,519,000. The out-fit for the seal-fishery in 1847, consisted of 321 vessels, with a tonnage of 29,800 tons, and employing 9,750 men. A large number of vessels for sale, are annually built in each of the Provinces, which business gives employment to a large number of people.

It will be seen from the above, that no one of the colonies, except Canada, exports grain or flour. This fact should be noticed, because of the suggestion sometimes made that the admission of flour and grain, duty free, would introduce competition injurious to Western farmers. The other colonies are large consumers of foreign breadstuffs, and have received their supplies for some years past from the United States, notwithstanding there is imposed a duty of from 25 to 75 cents per barrel on our flour. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have been among our best customers for flour, and have, also, with the other eastern Provinces, bought their chief supplies of all foreign articles in our markets. To show what amount of trade with her own colonies, we have been gradually taking from England, I will state that the whole amount of exports from the United States to all the Provinces, twenty years ago, was a little over \$3,000,000. It is now considerably over four times that sum. The total exports from Great Britain to the colonies in 1840, was about \$15,400,000; in 1849, it was not much above \$11,000,000, showing a comparative loss of 30 per cent. in nine years.

I know the discouragements which manufacturers have had to encounter; the actual loss which they have experienced, of more than half their limited capital; the long years of depressions, during which they have been without dividends or other returns. I know, too, that when they have made profits, it has been by rising early, sitting up late, and eating the bread of carefulness. Since I have been in Congress, it has been one of my chief anxieties to be serviceable in procuring a national modification of the tariff, by which, at least, the evils of ad valorem duties might be removed. But we have had so much of politics always uppermost, so many topics of excitement ever on hand, so much jealousy of the effect of a change in the tariff, upon the prospect of parties, and individual aspirations for the Presidency, that though I have seen a Whig majority as well as a Democratic majority here, and though the general conviction of fair men of all parties has sanctioned a modification, nothing has been done, and I expect nothing to be done during this Congress. The question of the tariff has become hopelessly involved with party, and I advise manufacturers hereafter to expect no protection from Government, and never to invest a dollar on the presumption that

Congress will do any thing to render it profitable. It must be acknowledged, too, that we have needed customers as well as protection. The market has been overstocked. We must now try to hunt up other markets. Protection under our Government may last long enough to put a vast amount of capital at hazard, but is sure to be abrogated before it can be safely dispensed with. "A fluctuating tariff is more to be dreaded than one which defies every law of political economy." The energy of our people can surmount any obstacles that can be calculated and provided against, but will be broken when their industry is made the dice by which political tacticians seek to rob each other of power.

The subject of reciprocity is not a party question; it is not a Canadian question; it is an American question. It has received the sanction, though not the efficient attention of the most prominent men of both the great parties of the country; and I believe it not only will not injure the manufacturers, but is of great consequence to their future prosperity. It will provide new markets for their fabrics, of a value and extent of which few now have any conception. By opening the way for our neighbors to bring to our markets what they have, and we want, we shall be able to sell them what we have, and they want. It is much more for the interest and convenience of the people of the Provinces to trade with us than with any other country, and nothing can prevent their doing this, except a narrow-minded, short-sighted policy of restriction, unworthy of us in our dealings with a neighboring nation, where the price of labor is as high as it is here, and whose situation renders our trade with them as natural as it is between the States. They are yearly opening new communications to our seacoast and large cities, and are yearly visiting us in quadrupled numbers. They have no manufactures, and they want, provided we let them bring their produce to our markets, our cotton, iron, and other manufactures. They have the same wants which our manufactures were established to supply; they have the same tastes, fashions, and customs. As they admit our manufactures on the same terms as those of Great Britain, we can manufacture for them every thing which we can profitably manufacture for ourselves. The proposition before us is that of adding more than two millions of people, soon to become double that number, to the consumers of our

fabrics. They are at our doors, asking the privilege to benefit themselves by benefitting us. Let us attend to so important a matter without delay. Let gentlemen judge of the magnitude of the trade under consideration, and of its rapid increase the abolition of differential duties in 1843, by the fact that in 1840, our whole export of manufactured articles to Canada amounted to only \$100,000. In 1845 it reached the amount of \$1,700,000. In the last fiscal year the total amount of manufactured articles exported to all foreign countries was less than \$20,000,000, while the amount sent to the British Provinces was over \$5,500,000. One-fourth part of our exported domestic cotton manufactures, and nearly one-fourth part of our iron, and manufactures of iron, find their consumers in the British Provinces. I believe the country is not aware of the value of these markets to us. If the people were awake to the matter, I should have no fears that the lucrative trade we now enjoy, and that which we may easily obtain, will be turned needlessly away to find other channels and other markets.

Again, the advantage of bringing the Provincial trade to our markets, by making it for their profit to buy and sell, like our own citizens, in our large cities, is seen in the important benefit which it would be certain to confer upon our railroads, steamboats, and canals. How important a matter it would be to monopolise the carrying trade of two millions of people is readily seen. The profit arising from the employment of men and capital, and the impulse it would give to all other interests in a country, should not be overlooked by any. But inasmuch as the most populous portion of the Provinces are separated from our maritime cities, where they desire and propose to transact most of their business, by a wide strip of our own country, we must transport their exports and imports, mainly, over our railroads, on our steamboats, and through our canals. The travel and the trade would be immense, and I could readily mention several railroads in my own State, as well as elsewhere, to which the enactment of this measure is of very great importance.

I have already alluded to the objection that the admission of Canadian wheat, would open an injurious competition with the wheat ground of the West. This country annually receives a foreign emigration of 300,000 people, a larger

portion of whom immediately become producers of wheat, than are sufficient to raise all the supplies that the British Provinces ever export. Yet our farmers are not sensibly injured. Competition fairly exercised only develops the energies of the people. But those who raise this objection do not plainly consider the whole case. The growth of our cities, the increased business of the population engaged on our internal channels of communication, would divert a portion of the people from the business of production, and would increase consumption, more than enough, it is believed, to counterbalance this increase in quantity of flour. It must be remembered too that we have latterly exported nearly as much flour and other bread-stuff to the eastern Provinces, as had been imported from Canada.

In the year 1850 the amount of imports of flour and wheat from Canada into the United States is reckoned at a little more than \$2,000,000. During the same year we exported bread-stuff to the lower Provinces valued at over \$180,000.

Thus it appears that the whole surplus of the British Provinces might be absorbed in our commerce without lessening the prices of our products at all. Take off the duty on their natural products, and a stimulus will soon be given to their business, which will increase their population, and make them much larger consumers of our articles than they now are, as well as greatly promote the prosperity of both countries.

There is one other article of Western commerce that would be enhanced in value by opening the Canada markets, and that is pork. A multitude of men are engaged in the lumber business of Canada whose most important article of food is pork. This staple product of the West, where corn is raised so easily, and in such abundance, can nowhere else be afforded so cheap, and therefore our Western farmers will assuredly provide supplies for the lumber men. Great advantage will also accrue from an increased supply of all kinds of lumber at somewhat lower prices than is now paid. Lumber is a necessity of life in every civilized society. Measures should be as readily taken to facilitate its acquisition as that of bread-stuffs and clothing. It is well known that the supply is rapidly decreasing in New England, and any scheme that shall be adopted to give us free access to the boundless

pineries of Canada and New Brunswick, will greatly promote the general good.

This measure of reciprocal trade, connected with the protection and extension of our fishing privileges and the free navigation of the St. Lawrence, has received the favorable consideration of many of our distinguished statesmen, and all whom I have known ever to have considered the subject. I believe it to be in accordance with the general sentiments of the American people, and I hope it will no longer be neglected.

A few words more and I will close. The history of the world shows that those nations which first arrived to a high stage of improvement, and from which has proceeded the civilization that now covers so large a portion of the globe, have all inhabited coasts and tracts of country indented by bays, gulfs, friths, and other bodies of water, favoring extensive commercial intercourse. The situation of Arabia, Palestine, Greece and Italy, and the history of their influence in colonizing, civilizing, and christianizing the world, are illustrations of the truth of my remark in ancient history; while the situation of England, France, Germany, and the nations about the Baltic, illustrate its truth in modern times. On the other hand, the condition of the people of Asia and Africa, proves how slow is the march of improvement in countries not favored by natural channels of internal communication. Our own continent was wonderfully provided by the Creator with every means of greatness. There is no element in the heavens above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters of the earth, necessary for man's prosperity, which he does not find here in abundance. Every needed necessity in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdom is here, ready for the subjecting hand of man; while an exuberant fruitfulness of soil, and a wonderful healthfulness of climate, indicate the great multitude of people whom God has destined to inhabit this land. His finger has traced the channels of our rivers, located our broad and mighty lakes, and opened navigation half way across the continent. Let us not fail of doing every thing on our part to keep forever open and free, these great natural channels of commerce, fellowship, and good will.

