

The repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty is intended partly as a punishment of these provinces for their sympathy with the Southern States during the late struggle, and partly as an annoyance to Great Britain for her alleged bad faith as a neutral power. But sir, there can be less doubt that it is chiefly relied on—I mean the repeal of the treaty, as a great means of fostering annexation sentiments in British North America. I shall prove this assertion presently beyond the possibility of doubt. Assuming it to be correct, is it not our duty to adopt such steps as may frustrate any such design? Now, Sir, I ask what step is so likely to conduce to the result we have in view, as an union under one Government, which will give all these colonies a common policy, and a common platform of action? Isolation in relation to reciprocal trade, in the present crisis, has peculiar dangers. It gives the Washington authorities complete command of the whole situation. It gives them the power of playing us off against each other, of exciting jealousies, producing dissensions, and creating interests which can have but one tendency. No Government under the sun more thoroughly understands that game than the Government of the United States. They will play it to our ruin and their own advantage, if we leave the cards in their hands. I do not wish to go further in connection with this view of the subject, but it has had a powerful influence on my mind. It affords a most weighty argument in favor of immediate union.

I have said that the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty is intended to produce annexation tendencies in British America. I think I can adduce evidence on this point so conclusive as to amount to a moral demonstration. Allow me, in the first place, to revert to the history of the Commercial Congress held last summer in Detroit, representing the great mercantile interests of the U. States and B. America. Need I remind hon. gentlemen that on that occasion an important functionary of the Washington government—a gentleman occupying the high position of American Consul at Montreal, the first city in British America, declared that he attended that Congress at the request of his government, and with authority to express their views and wishes with regard to reciprocal trade. He earnestly advised the abrogation of the treaty, and openly and insultingly told the colonial members of the Convention that the object of this policy was to produce the annexation of British America to the Republic. We have, then, the fact that Mr. Potter went to Detroit, declaring himself in the confidence of his government, and the exponent of their views, and we all know that his utterances have never been disowned by his masters, and we have the further most important fact that on the first meeting of Congress, the policy that gentleman foreshadowed as that of the Washington government was carried out. If, then, Mr. Potter was correct in foreshadowing the policy of his government, is not the conclusion irresistible that he was equally correct as to the wishes and motives that were at the foundation of that policy? These significant facts cannot fail to make a due impression on the mind of every man who desires to maintain our connection with the Empire; and they strongly

confirm my convictions not only of the desirability but of the necessity of Union.

We know from the newspaper press of the United States that the question of an union of British America has attracted considerable attention in that country, and that the proposal is generally received with little partiality. Those journals especially noted for their violent antipathy towards everything British do not conceal their hostility to the measure, and the grounds of that hostility. We find that those who oppose union are applauded as the friends of annexation, while those who advocate it receive very different treatment. Let me treat the house to an extract from a journal marked for the violence and virulence of its abuse of Great Britain and these colonies—the *N. Y. Herald*—as indicative of the hopes entertained in that quarter as the inevitable result of a refusal on our part to unite, and concentrate our strength. The *Herald* of the 10th of March last, referring to the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty, says:—

“Meantime, the Provincials who have had a taste of the blessings of free trade with the ‘Yankees’ under this expiring Reciprocity Treaty, are called upon to consider the question of their ‘manifest destiny’ in the proposition from Queen Victoria for a North American Confederation under the vice-royalty of a member of her family. This movement contemplates a consolidation, which has already been declined by Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; but it is not thus to be abandoned. AN AGITATION WILL BE APT TO FOLLOW, WHICH IN DUE TIME WILL GRAVITATE TO THE EASY, NATURAL AND ADVANTAGEOUS SOLUTION OF ANNEXATION TO THE UNITED STATES.”

Sir, there is something in this language that should arrest the attention of every man not blinded by party or other unworthy feelings. What is the meaning of this “agitation” with which we are threatened? Is the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty merely the initiation of a systematic design to undermine our allegiance and annex us? Have the Government of the United States their agents in this country for this purpose, as insinuated by the *Herald*? If they have, it will not long remain a secret, for the hour of action is at hand, when we all must be judged by the sympathies we avow, and the company we keep. I am aware that no man would dare openly advocate annexation, but if there be any among us who desire it, they will take the more safe and insidious means of attaining their end by exciting disaffection on any pretext that will offer itself. The language of the *Herald* affords reasonable grounds for watchfulness, and it is only right that the country should be on its guard.

Now, sir, there is another consideration that has its just weight with me. The Imperial Government has spoken on this subject in terms not to be mistaken, and firmly and persistently urges on the people of British America the necessity for Union. I know there are persons who talk very flippantly of the interference of Colonial Secretaries or the British Government, in our affairs. For my part, sir, while I would as readily as any one resist improper interference from any quarter in the public affairs of this Province, I would be sorry to deny the right of the Queen's Government to use its just influence and authority in all matters of Imperial concern. Much less would I dream of anything so absurd as to dispute its right to deal with any measure affecting the integrity of the Empire. On all