

lows: we buy five times as much from Canada as Canada buys from us. The life savings of our people, which amounts to eight or ten millions of new life insurance yearly, goes to Canada, rather than stays here to develop the industries of Newfoundland. Possibly this may be a good reason to send a delegation to Canada, but if it be, what can be said of a delegation to a country that each year buys from us more than we buy from her, and in addition to which sends into this country millions of dollars from our immigrants living there?

It is not a one-way financial traffic that we seek, as our relations with Canada happen to be, and it is about time that something is done about it. A lot of our economic uncertainty is because of the fact that we are a milch cow for Canadian business interests, and our economic prosperity would be advanced if we were to decrease, rather than increase the one-way business traffic with Canada, and increase it with the USA.

In 1890, when Sir Robert Bond negotiated the Bond-Blaine treaty, it was blocked by Canada with the concurrence of the British government.¹ Later, about 15 years ago I believe, when our government was negotiating an advantageous trade agreement with the West Indies with respect to our fish, this agreement too was blocked by Canada; and a few years later the big hearted Canadian government descended to penny-pinching antics by discontinuing the few dollars that they contributed as subsidy to the steamer on the Cabot Strait. When Sir Robert Bond tried to negotiate the Bond-Blaine treaty, which would have meant the economic salvation of Newfoundland, it was objected to by Canada, and blocked by the interference of the British government. The British government has now told us that we can no longer expect financial assistance. This is all right, but may I ask the British government one favour, that if they are not prepared to help us, will they please in future do nothing to hinder us.

In 1775, I believe, a small body of poor, hungry, ill-equipped Englishmen, and the sons of Englishmen, who were settled along the New England coast felt that their economic and political interests were being retarded and blocked by

the English government. What did these Englishmen do? Did they say, "Hush, hush, don't wake the baby"? No, poor as they were, they had the spirit of independence, which has made England great and which has made Britishers the great pioneers, fearless and forward-looking people wherever they have gone. They said "No", and out of that came the War of Independence, and the USA. It was conceived in the hearts of Englishmen and brought to fruition by Englishmen, and it was this same USA that four or five years ago sent her sons and daughters to England's aid, and made it possible for England to survive in her greatest struggle. Is it then inopportune or improper for us to approach this subject any less fearlessly than those poor Englishmen did in 1775?....

Mr. Smallwood I am an unreformed, unregenerate and unrepentant free trader. If this country could have free trade with the United States, it would be a great thing. If we could have free trade with the Dominion of Canada, it would be a great thing. If we could have free trade with every country in the world, it would be a great thing for the people of this country. I believe in abolishing every single cent of customs duties. I am a believer in bringing down the cost of living. The only way I can see to do that is by absolutely free trade. Now, if this motion passes, we may get a committee of this Convention going to Washington. We may.... It may be received by the Government of the United States. If it is, they could talk about trade and tariffs, and maybe we could get some trade with the United States. As a free trader and only as a free trader — and remember that cuts all ways, local industries, protected industries that are an imposition on this country, will be wiped out, and our people will get a chance to live. I am all for our people getting a chance to live, and I don't care if there are a dozen or a hundred whose toes will be trod on. I am only concerned with the people in this country who have never had a break in the 450 years of our history. Whenever they poked their head up over the stage head, there was someone there to kick them down again. Let's get free trade if we are allowed to send a delegation and if they will receive one. I will not vote against it.

¹A draft reciprocity treaty negotiated by Robert Bond, then Colonial Secretary in the Newfoundland government, and Secretary of State James Blaine of the United States in 1890. The British government refused to approve the treaty, in response to opposition in Canada.