

EXTRACTO

DEL ACTA DE SESIONES DE LA CAMARA DE LOS COMUNES,

DEL DIA 6 DE ABRIL DE 1877.

Mr. Dillwyn called attention to the inconvenience arising to the trade of this country owing to the want of diplomatic or consular relations between Great Britain and Mexico. Our imports from Mexico now amounted to between £700,000 and £800,000 a year, and our exports to that country to between £800,000 and £900,000, and that trade could be largely increased if official relations were re-established between the two countries. There was, he knew, some little difficulty in the way of bringing about an understanding in consequence of some point of honour or punctilio between this country and Mexico, but surely from the position England held she could readily afford to make the advances which would terminate the existing dispute and bring about a state of things which would promote the interests of both countries.

Mr. Whitwell said that until the Department of Trade and Agriculture could be divided, the House ought heartily and cheerfully to support and strengthen the Foreign Office, so as to enable it to meet any difficulties that might arise. He could say for himself and for those with whom he acted, who were connected with Chambers of Commerce, that they had always found the Foreign Office ready and willing to cooperate with them in all matters which they had occasion to bring under the notice of that Department. There could be no doubt, however, that the staff of the Foreign Office required to be strengthened, and that the branch of it which was connected with trade and commerce was entitled to claim the services of a Secretary of its own. With reference to Mexico, he desired to support the suggestion of his honorable friend the member for Swansea, having no doubt that the re-opening of diplomatic or consular relations between England and that country would be of great advantage to the trade of each. He was glad to see that France was meditating a restoration of diplomatic relations with Mexico, and he hoped that Her Majesty's Government would be able to cooperate in the endeavour which the French Government seemed disposed to make.

Mr. Bourke did not think that either the hon. member for Banbury could have cause to complain of the fact that a division was not possible upon the question, because it was clear that the opinion of the House was almost, if not entirely, unanimous upon the question under consideration. Every one must wish that our relations with Foreign Powers should be as amicable as possible, but at

the same time it could not be forgotten that the rupture of our relations with Mexico was brought about in a way which rendered it almost impossible for Her Majesty's Government to take the initiative in any steps for the restoration of friendly relations between the two Powers. At the same time he was free to state that if the Mexican Government by it self or through the mediation of an other Power made proposals for the restoration of the relations which once existed between their own country and England, Her Majesty's Government would be disposed to meet those proposals in a friendly manner. (Hear, hear.) With the exception of the few cases mentioned by the hon. member of Swansea he had not heard of any hardships inflicted upon British commerce with Mexico owing to the fact that we have no consular representative there. Our Consular business had, since the rupture of the relations, been conducted by the United States consul; and he might say, although he could not deny that advantage would result from England being directly represented, that the business had been very satisfactorily performed. (Hear.) It would, without doubt, be advantageous to have consular representatives of England at the Mexican seaports, but the condition of affairs in Mexico was such that it would not be desirable to place Consular officers in the interior of a country the Central Government of which was not likely to give to such officers the protection which they had a right to require. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for Banbury had stated that the commercial community of this country was dissatisfied with the manner in which the commercial business of the Foreign Office was managed. He could not think, judging from the small number of hon. members present, that this was a perfectly accurate representation of the facts. It was true that in former times when the business was divided between the Board of Trade and the Foreign Office the work was not done in thoroughly satisfactory manner, but since the reorganization of the Department in 1872 a much better state of things had existed. As far as the question of tariffs which had been raised was concerned, he could only say that it involved considerations which could not be dealt with of hand, but that careful attention should be paid to the points which had been laid before the House. (Hear, hear.) As far as interchange between the commercial and diplomatic services in the Foreign Office were concerned, he could only say that the different departments were on precisely the same footing and that there was no difficulty in transferring clerks from one department to another. With respect to the present constitution of the commercial department of the Foreign Office, it had the great advantage that it was organised, and it would be almost impossible to put an Under-Secretary of State at the head of it without placing one also at the head of almost all the other departments of the office. On the whole, too, it was found that the commercial department worked well. The commercial bodies who came up to London had, at all events, no complaints to make of the way in which its business was transacted, and under those circumstances he certainly did not think a sufficient case had been made out for a change. He at the same time was glad that the hon. member for Banbury had had an opportunity of bringing the subject before the House, because he was quite sure his noble friend at the head of the Foreign Office would pay every attention to the debate and would not, if he saw necessity for it, hesitate one moment to increase his staff. He could not, however, held out the hope seeing the way in which the work of the office was done that any great change would be made in the organization of the commercial department. (Hear, hear.)

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Mr. Dillwyn llamó la atención hácia los inconvenientes para el tráfico de este país, debidos á la falta de relaciones diplomáticas ó consulares entre la Gran-Bretaña y México. Nuestras importaciones procedentes de México ascienden actualmente de £ 700,000 á £ 800,000 al año, y nuestras exportaciones para aquel país de £ 800,000 á 900,000, y este tráfico podría aumentarse notablemente si se restablecieran las relaciones oficiales entre ambos países. Agregó que sabia habia una pequeña dificultad en la manera de llegar á entenderse, á consecuencia de algun punto de honor ó susceptibilidad que existe entre este país y México; pero que seguramente la posicion que guardaba Inglaterra le permitia poder fácilmente dar los primeros pasos que terminarían las diferencias existentes y que darían por resultado un estado de cosas benéfico para los intereses de ambos países.

Mr. Whitwell dijo: que miéntras que el departamento de comercio y agricultura no estuviese dividido, la cámara debia apoyar de todo corazon y con buena voluntad al Departamento de Negocios Extranjeros, para ponerlo en aptitud de hacer frente á cualesquiera dificultades que puedan suscitarse; que podia decir á su nombre y al de las personas con cuyo acuerdo obraba, que tenian relaciones con la Cámara de Comercio, que siempre habian encontrado en el Departamento de Negocios Extranjeros buena disposicion y voluntad para cooperar con ellos en todos los asuntos sobre los que habian tenido ocasion de llamar la atención de aquel Departamento; que no podia haber duda, sin embargo, que el personal del Departamento de Negocios Extranjeros requería ser aumentado, y que la parte de él que se ocupaba del tráfico y del comercio tenia derecho á pretender los servicios de un Secretario propio; que con referencia á México, deseaba apoyar la sugestion de su honorable amigo el miembro por Swansea, no dudando que el restablecimiento de las relaciones diplomáticas ó consulares entre Inglaterra y aquel país traeria grandes ventajas para el comercio de ambos; que veia con gusto que Francia se ocupaba de restablecer sus relaciones diplomáticas con México, y que deseaba que el Gobierno de S. M. cooperase en la empresa que el Gobierno francés parecia dispuesto llevar á cabo.

Mr. Bourke no creia que ni el honorable miembro por Swansea ni el nombrado por Banbury podian tener motivo para quejarse del hecho de que no era posible dividir la cuestion puesto que era claro que el parecer de la Cámara era casi unánime, si no completamente, en la cuestion que se consideraba. Todo el mundo debia desear que nuestras relaciones con las potencias extranjerias fuesen

tan amistosas como fuese posible, pero al mismo tiempo no podía echarse en olvido que la ruptura de nuestras relaciones con México fué llevada á cabo de una manera que hacia casi imposible para el Gobierno de S. M. el que tomase la iniciativa, dando cualquier paso para la restauracion de las amistosas relaciones entre ambas potencias. Al mismo tiempo manifestaba, con toda libertad, que si el Gobierno mexicano, por sí mismo ó por conducto de otra potencia, hacia proposiciones para la restauracion de las relaciones que en otro tiempo existieran, entre su propio país é Inglaterra, el Gobierno de S. M. estaria dispuesto á acoger tales proposiciones de una manera amistosa, (Atencion, atencion.) Con excepcion de los pocos casos mencionados por el honorable miembro por Swansea, dijo que no habia oido hablar de ningunas dificultades sobrevenidas al comercio británico con México, debidas al hecho de no tener allí representante consular; que desde la ruptura de relaciones, nuestros negocios consulares han estado á cargo del Cónsul de los Estados-Unidos; y que podia decir que estos asuntos habian sido despachados muy satisfactoriamente, aunque no podia negar que resultarían ventajas de que Inglaterra estuviese directamente representada (Atencion.) Que sin duda alguna, sería ventajoso tener representantes consulares de Inglaterra en los puertos mexicanos; pero el estado de cosas en México era tal, que no era de desear enviar empleados consulares al interior de un país, cuyo gobierno central no podia prestarles la proteccion que tenian derecho de exigir (Atencion, atencion). Que el honorable miembro por Banbury habia manifestado que los comerciantes de este país estaban disgustados de la manera con que se manejaban los negocios comerciales en el Departamento de Negocios extranjeros. Que, á juzgar por el pequeño número de honorables miembros que se hallaban presentes, no podia creer que aquella opinion fuese perfectamente exacta: que era cierto que en los primeros tiempos, cuando los negocios estaban divididos entre la junta de comercio y el Departamento de Negocios Extranjeros, los trabajos no se hacian de una manera perfectamente satisfactoria, pero que existía un mucho mejor estado de cosas, desde la organizacion del Departamento en 1872. En lo relativo á la cuestion de tarifas, que habia sido suscitada, solo podia decir que implicaba consideraciones que no podian tomarse en cuenta inmediatamente, pero que se considerarian atentamente los puntos que habian sido sometidos á la Cámara. (Atencion, atencion). En lo relativo al cambio en el servicio comercial y diplomático del Departamento de Negocios Extranjeros, solo podia decir que los diferentes Departamentos estaban exactamente bajo el mismo pié, y que no habia dificultad en pasar á los empleados de un Departamento á otro. Respecto de la presente manera en que está constituido el Departamento comercial de Negocios Extranjeros, tiene la gran ventaja de estar ya organizado, y sería casi imposible colocar un Sub-Secretario de Estado á su cabeza, sin colocar otro tambien á la de casi todos los demás Departamentos. Tambien en conjunto se veia que el Departamento comercial desempeñaba perfectamente bien su cometido. En todo caso los cuerpos comerciales que habian venido á Londres, no tenian quejas que formular respecto de la manera en que sus asuntos se llevaban á cabo, y en estas circunstancias no creia ciertamente que se hubiese presentado un solo caso para inclinar á un cambio. Que al mismo tiempo le complacia que el honorable miembro por Banbury hubiese hallado oportunidad de proponer el asunto á la Cámara, porque estaba enteramente seguro de que su noble amigo, que se halla á la cabeza del Departamento de Negocios Extranjeros, seguirá con toda atencion el debate y no vacilaria ni un momento, si para ello veia necesidad, en aumentar su personal. Sin embargo, no podia desistir de la esperanza, al ver la manera en que se despachaban los trabajos de aquella oficina, de que se aumentara notablemente la organizacion del Departamento comercial. (Atencion atencion.)

Tira del "Times" de Londres del día 28 de Abril de 1877.

It is now nearly ten years since Europe was startled by the news of the execution of Maximilian of Austria. To the official world of Europe during this interval Mexico has been as it were some region in the interior of Africa, yet under this name is included a vast country, yielding to no portion of the earth in natural advantages, and inhabited by a population numbering some ten millions; Small as that population is compared with the extent of territory which it occupies, and barbarous as are its customs, the Mexicans are still a community professing to walk in the ways of modern civilization, to seek in commerce and industry and the various processes of production occupation and the means of supplying their wants. They have, moreover, developed important relations with Europe, in spite of the disorder which reigns in their country, in spite of the ostracism to which, in indignation of their political crimes, they have been for some years subjected. A certain amount of business, it is found, is done between this country and Mexico. There are people in Mexico who, notwithstanding the violence and passion existing in their country, are cool-headed enough to find the advantage of dealing with this country, and are intelligent enough to make it worth the while of our merchants to deal with them. Though chronic anarchy still prevails in the country, a certain amount of trade goes on between Mexico and England, and with this fact before them many merchants have come to the conclusion that diplomacy had better recognize the existing Mexican Government and resume relations with this somewhat Bohemian nationality. The same question has been recently presented in Parliament, and should be determined by a consideration of the principles on which the abandonment of relations with Mexico was resolved on in 1860 and of the actual position of British interests in that country at the present time.

The first question in these cases is what is the object of what are called diplomatic relations, and there can be no doubt that the country undertakes the cost of paying Ambassadors and Ministers in order to protect British interests. These officials are not maintained for the benefit or the honour of the foreign nationality to which they are accredited. They are sent to a particular spot to watch over the interests of the nation which sent them. In diplomacy, as in tactics, much depends on what is termed the moral effect, in other words, the influence of certain acts on the imagination of the crowd, and the withdrawal of an Ambassador, with the breaking off of diplomatic relations, is a demonstration of discontent which may produce a useful result among foreign populations. This interruption of relations is something in diplomacy equivalent to the denunciation by Bell, Book and Candle practised by the mediæval Church. But if it is found that, notwithstanding these strong measures, the erring community thus denounced not only maintains its national existence, but